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SIXTH THOUSAND.

HOW I MANAGED
MY
CHILDREN



FROM
INFANCY
TO
MARRIAGE



BY
MRS WARREN.



LONDON:

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HOW I MANAGED
MY CHILDREN
FROM
INFANCY TO MARRIAGE

BY
MRS. WARREN
EDITRESS OF THE "LADIES' TREASURY"
AUTHOR OF
"HOW I MANAGED MY HOUSE ON TWO HUNDRED POUNDS A YEAR"

LONDON
HOULSTON AND WRIGHT
65, PATERNOSTER ROW
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PREFACE.

MATRIMONY to a young girl often presents the fairest prospects of earthly happiness: "it is the desired haven where she would be." As a Wife, she imagines herself free to do as she pleases, without control, and she fancies that Marriage emancipates her from all wearisome home duties. A month of wedded life dispels these illusions. Similar employments are hers to take up, but to them is added a great responsibility; and if a practical observant education fitting her for Wifehood has not been attained, "all her life is passed in shallows and in miseries."

When such a girl becomes a Mother her helplessness is painful to witness. She makes her babe the one object of her life, to the utter exclusion of her husband's comfort, and fancies all kinds of ailments in herself and her infant. The doctor is in continual demand, and, instead of a joy in her home, she becomes a perpetual weariness. If her mother be living near, daily visits are implored; this intercourse leads to interference in household matters, and thus discontent is produced between husband and wife.

To young Mothers requiring help this book may be of some assistance in giving information on the management of infants, though its recipes for children's complaints are not intended to supersede medical advice.

As regards Education, no rule can be offered for general

adoption, from the fact that the circumstances of families vary; but there is one thing of serious importance which every mother should feel as of vital interest—to train her daughters in all useful occupations, not only to attain perfection in the lighter domestic duties, but to teach them, or permit them to be taught, the arts of Cooking, Baking, Brewing, Washing, and Ironing. Not that it is necessary they should act as servants, but that they should know enough to teach their domestics, or, if need be, to turn to those employments themselves.

The greatest curse to Society and to the Maidens of England has been the diffusion of the silly sinful Dogma that Woman loses caste by honestly earning her bread.

By being self-helpful she is not rendered less modest, amiable, or affectionate, less loving, or less enduring; but, on the contrary, the sweet influence of labour accomplished gives a healthier tone of mind and a more cheerful spirit.

These Topics have all been attended to in this little Work.

The Authoress begs to express her grateful acknowledgments for the favourable reception which her previous work, "How I Managed my House on Two Hundred Pounds a Year," has been received, many thousands having been sold. She indulges the hope that "How I Managed my Children from Infancy to Marriage" may be found of service to all mothers and daughters, but more especially to those of the middle class of life, for whose use and benefit it has been written.

LONDON, *June*, 1865.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

- TRIAL WITH A FIRST BABY — INFANTS' FOOD — HOW TO INCREASE A CHILD'S SUFFERINGS WHEN CUTTING ITS TEETH
—THE TREATMENT OF INFANTS WHEN SICK—NURSE ADAMS 7

CHAPTER II.

- THE CROUP AND ITS TREATMENT—TEACHING INFANTS TO WALK
—HOW THEIR LEGS BECOME CROOKED—NERVOUS CHILDREN
—VENTILATION AND LIGHT NECESSARY FOR THEM . . . 19

CHAPTER III.

- THE ADVENTURES OF AN INFANT IN A CHILD'S CARRIAGE—
THE WHOOPING COUGH—MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DIET 25

CHAPTER IV.

- CONDUCT BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THE SECOND CHILD—A CURE
FOR SICKNESS—BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM EXERCISE,
AIR, AND FOOD 29

CHAPTER V.

- THE BIRTH OF OTHER CHILDREN—CONTROL OVER THEM IN INFANCY—THEIR EARLY EDUCATION—THEIR DIET, MEDICINE
—TRANSGRESSION—REPENTANCE 32

CHAPTER VI.

- EARLY EDUCATION — HISTORY — GEOGRAPHY — GRAMMAR —
SPELLING—DRAWING—DOT BECOMES AN ARTIST — GIRLS
AT SCHOOL—MUSIC LESSONS 39

CHAPTER VII.

- BIBLE TEACHING — THE ARTIST'S SUCCESS — A DREAM OF THE
FUTURE—ILLNESS—DEATH—REBELLION—A SECOND DEATH
—SUBMISSION 47

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD'S CHOICE OF A BUSINESS—HIS ADVERTISING—ITS RESULTS—HIS EXPERIENCE IN LONDON	54
---	----

CHAPTER IX.

A BUSINESS OCCUPATION NECESSARY FOR GIRLS—MARRYING FOR A HOME NOT A HAPPY PROCEEDING—THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO GIVE THEIR DAUGHTERS AN OPPORTUNITY OF MARRYING—THE STORY OF AN OLD MAID—THE SELFISHNESS OF PARENTS—HOW TO INCREASE A CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES	59
---	----

CHAPTER X.

SCHOOL FRIENDS—THE PARTY—CHRISTMAS EVE—THE CHARACTERS OF THE FRIENDS—LEVITY OF MANNERS—EXCUSES FOR SHOPPING—INVITATION TO THE BALL	68
--	----

CHAPTER XI.

THE BALL—NEW ACQUAINTANCES—CUPID'S GOLDEN SHAF—TRUE LOVE UNMISTAKEABLE—TRAINING FOR WORK—THE VISIT TO LONDON	76
--	----

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCHOOL OF ART AT KENSINGTON—THE FEMALE SCHOOL OF ART IN QUEEN SQUARE—WOOD ENGRAVING—MODELLING—MARY AND JANET SETTLED TO A TRADE—THEIR HOMES—RICHARD'S TEMPTATIONS—ALICE'S FIRST TRIAL	82
---	----

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN OF THE SISTERS—THE SEWING MACHINE—THE LOVER'S RETURN—THE PROPOSAL AND MARRIAGE—MARY'S CAREER—FRANK'S DESTINY—HOW WALTER BECAME A CLERGYMAN—JANET'S MARRIAGE—YEARS OF HAPPINESS—HER HUSBAND'S DEATH—HOW SHE MANAGED AND EDUCATED HER CHILDREN—WHY SHE WROTE THE BOOK OF HOME COMFORTS FOR SMALL INCOMES—THE CONCLUSION	95
--	----

HOW I MANAGED MY CHILDREN.

CHAPTER I.

TRIAL WITH A FIRST BABY—INFANTS' FOOD—HOW TO INCREASE A CHILD'S SUFFERINGS WHEN CUTTING ITS TEETH—THE TREATMENT OF INFANTS WHEN SICK—NURSE ADAMS.

I WAS married in early life, scarcely eighteen, my husband being a collateral descendant of one of the oldest county families in England: on my mother's side, in the genealogical record which some of the family possessed, her descent could be traced back to the days of chivalry. I do not mention this in any pride of ancestry, but still it had a permanent influence on me. I suppose many of my ancestors had trouble, and certainly poverty; but no crime, as the world terms it, had branded their names or fair fame. The first time I heard of this I was but a wee child, sickly, puny, and pallid, giving constant trouble by my delicacy of constitution; but the story sank deep into my heart, and a new spirit seemed born within me—a spirit which would now infinitely rather see my children dead at my feet than hear that they had been guilty of debasing sin. God grant that this pride of heart be not punished yet before I die! I would not say to man depraved or woman lost, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." No! no! a thousand times no! Neither would I refuse to help, counsel, or bear with the fallen. But were the blot to fall upon either of my children, my heart would be no longer human, but seared and shrivelled, fearing that some past conduct of mine, some unguarded word, might have sown the seed. Narrow indeed is the path in which a mother must walk—not making her child an idol to be worshipped, or a toy of caprice. Soberly, orderly, and in the love of her Maker must she journey, knowing that she holds in her hand and cherishes at her breast an immortal spirit.

Through her the germ of future happiness or misery has budded: through her a blessing or a curse has been cast upon the world; on earth she has created either a follower of Christ or a companion of fiends.

Strange to say, the influence of the mother upon the child begins even during her months of pregnancy; therefore it behoves her to keep herself from vexatious cares and perplexities, even as she would shun pestilence. To do this requires an almost superhuman effort, to be obtained only by prayer for help, accompanied by an earnest will to

accomplish. Another thing, too, which influences a child's future is the self-indulgence which an expectant mother permits herself. Under the plea of delicacy of constitution and want of strength, exercise is avoided, and stimulants resorted to, and continued, till the child-spirit sent from the hand of God appears on the earth in human flesh, corrupt with the vices and taint of the mother.

After the fifth month, then, until the ninth, exercise of limb, not the abuse of exercise, is as necessary to the future comfort of the mother as it is to the wellbeing of the child. "I am too weak, too ill, to walk," are words which have put more guineas into doctors' purses, created more difficult births, bereaved more husbands of their wives, and more children of their mothers, than any other omission or act resulting from ignorance or idleness.

Before the birth of my first child I was irritable, peevish, and self-indulgent: to work was a burden; all my baby clothes were put out to make, for I did not know how to cut them out or make them up. There was the first wrong step. My husband's income was even less than two hundred a year; but then, what mattered? Delicacies we could dispense with; we had between us a wealth of affection for each other, and I had the magnificent sum of one hundred pounds presented to me as a marriage gift by my godmother. A thought of prudence and industry never entered my mind: the needlework in my mother's family had always been put out, and why not in mine, a young bride's first home? So I let nine months glide away. I lay on the sofa all day under pretence of weakness—indeed, in the latter part of the time to move from one room to the other was a journey hardly to be accomplished. I could eat and drink well enough, and often idly desired dainties, which the great love of my husband readily procured. I do not wish to infer that all ungratified longings during this period are the result of idleness and an ill-governed mind. This is not always the case; but mine were so, and it is of myself and my experiences I am now writing.

The consequences of my continued lying late in bed, keeping late hours at night, and tampering with my digestive powers were something fearful. At the time of my babe's birth my life was despaired of. From miscalculations, almost always incidental to young mothers with their first child, I could not obtain the nurse I desired to have, but was obliged to put up with a total stranger. I had no mother living to be with me, nor any other familiar relative beyond an aged maiden aunt, and she was my slave. I could do no wrong in her eyes—indeed, she pampered me in all my ignorant follies. To Providence, in the guise of my stranger nurse, I am indebted for a cheerful happy life after this first sad event. For eight weeks I lay lingering near death, and ultimately recovered, with a painful indifference to life, to find a little puny wizened infant vegetating upon milk diet, while the sweetest reward of a mother was denied me: I had no sustenance to give it.

Weeks passed on with healing in their sight, but nurse remained, at the earnest wish of my husband. She was not expensive to keep, and she had that about her which enforced my respect. When I became strong, she urged, with all respectful deference, but yet with firmness,

that I should walk daily, not merely stroll, but till the glow of health ran through my veins.

One day, as she was dressing my boy, who was yet very delicate, she said—

"This child should be one of prayer to you, ma'am."

"Why so, nurse?"

"Because, ma'am, if you had done your duty by him his little limbs would have been stronger, and he wouldn't have been so fractious."

"In what have I failed in duty to him?" I asked.

"Well, ma'am, I must speak out; 'tis my duty to do so when I see a young mother, healthy and strong, have a baby like this."

"How can I help its sickliness? You know I couldn't suckle it."

"No, you could not, as it turned out, but you might, if you had done yourself and him justice before he was born. I don't know whether you were very ill in the first four months, for some strong people are, but in the last you should have taken daily exercise in the open air, and never for a day missed it, wet or dry; and you shouldn't have eaten all sorts of fanciful trash, but kept yourself to pure wholesome food, for a depraved appetite soon comes, and always affects the temper of both mother and child. I dare say, now, ma'am, you were very cross at times, and unwilling to move off the sofa?"

"Yes, that was the case; I suffered so much from bile."

"Yes, and so will this child; but he will owe it to you. You must not be angry, ma'am; but you will find it true what I say. I fear you will have a sad hand with him by-and-bye."

"The child was starved before it was born, and food don't seem to nourish it now."

"But you don't give it any food, excepting that made with water. Why not try milk?"

"Because the child's stomach won't take it. It does him no good to stuff him; on the contrary, if I were to do so, a chance if he wouldn't have convulsions. But I have lately heard of a food which greatly benefits infants deprived of the breast. It was sent me by my daughter, who is head nurse in an English family in Munich, in Bavaria. She tells me that it was first made by a celebrated chemist for the use of his motherless grandchild, and it succeeded so well that the chemists there sell the malt flour and the potash in packets ready made up. But I suppose I could get the ingredients here."

So saying, she handed me the following recipe from her pocket-book:—

Food for infants deprived of breast-milk, invented by the celebrated Liebig.

Half an ounce of wheaten flour, not the whitest, but the "seconds," and an equal quantity of malt flour,* seven and a quarter grains of bicarbonate of potash, to be obtained at a druggist's, and one ounce of water. Mix it well together, then add five ounces of good cow's milk, and put the whole over a gentle fire. When the

* The malt can be obtained from any brewery, but it must be always freshly ground in a common coffee-mill, obtained for this purpose; then sifted through a coarse strainer, to separate the husks. It is half an ounce of the flour, free of husks, which must be used.

mixture begins to thicken remove it from the fire and stir it for *five minutes*; then heat it and stir it till it is quite fluid or thin; then let it boil a few minutes; *then strain it*, and it is fit for use, and will keep twenty-four hours without undergoing any change. It will require no sweetening; it is already as sweet as milk; and it contains the *double concentration of mother's milk*. Children thrive well on it, whether wholly or partially deprived of the mother's sustenance, and after a short time feeding on it many a trifling malady disappears. It has a slight flavour of malt, to which children soon get accustomed, and then they like it better than other food.

So it was tried, and with success. My boy thrived well; and soon after, nurse being compelled to leave me, I was left sole manager of an infant, with no notion of "how to do it."

After nurse was paid, nothing was left of my hundred pounds. I had now only my husband's salary of a hundred and eighty pounds a year, derived from a clerkship in a bank. What seemed wealth before I was married just now looked very like poverty.

Nurse's words had sunk deeply into my mind, though I would not acknowledge it. She had attributed my child's puny frame and fretful temper to my idle self-indulgence before he was born; and so I determined that I would be tenderly careful of my babe—that he should have a mother's attention now, if he had suffered from want of it before he saw the light.

Nurse had always improvised a bed for him beside hers. It was but two pillows placed in two armchairs, with their seats facing. She had insisted upon having new warm blankets, and no sheets, for him to sleep in—indeed, his pillow was covered with soft flannel. I saw all this, certainly with a species of contempt for what I was tempted to think almost *uncanny* ways, which I altered as soon as she left.

The first night after her departure my boy lay in my arms until we went to bed. It was a novelty to have him entirely to ourselves. I could not hug him enough; and in the exuberance of my unlimited affection had almost forgotten his supper, cooked by our maid-servant in the kitchen, which, when it came, had a suspicious blackness, and it was undeniably smoky. However, babe can't taste that, I thought; but didn't he, though? The yell he set up was piercing—very suggestive of pins and needles all over him. Arthur fidgetted about while I stuffed the child with as much food as I thought necessary, which the little obstinate thing rejected a moment after, and would have a perverse attack of hiccups; so that I had to place him across my shoulder and beat his back, to the utter detriment of my silk dress. By dint of much perseverance he was quieted and slept. Now, thought I, he shall lie in the refreshing cool sheets. Five minutes only of this treatment sufficed to drown our ears with his persistent cries.

"What is the matter?" Arthur pettishly exclaimed. "Unfasten him, Mary; he must have a pin sticking in him."

I sat up in bed, and he held the light while I examined him. No, there was nothing to cause his cries.

"Well," said he, "however puny his body may be, his voice is strong enough."

By dint of hushing and rocking I got him to sleep, and kept him on my arm close to me. After some time this constrained position prevented

my sleeping, but the moment I attempted to dislodge him from his roost a fractionary peevish cry was set up. This continued at intervals till nearly morning, when I gave in. My boy had mastered me; for, unwilling to break further the slumber of my husband, I succumbed to the little tyrant, and lay stiff in every limb. Worn out with fatigue and sleeplessness, morning dawned without affording me relief. I was unable to get up, and my husband ate his breakfast in discontent—alone; and as if the spirit of mischief possessed the child, he now lay immovable as a little log, quite regardless that I had turned him on to his father's pillow, and severed him from my protecting arms. The memory of that first night haunts me now—not that this was solitary in its discomfort, but first impressions are not readily effaced. Night succeeded night, varied only in its intensity of weariness by my husband volunteering to walk the room and “*h’shing*” it to rest—I don’t know how to write the word, but every mother so circumstanced will recognise my meaning. Each weary night, week after week, the little tyrant wore us out in temper, patience, and health, but always towards morning sank into blissful rest for itself and my tired frame, for my husband could not continue to walk with it through the night.

As its teeth appeared its fretfulness increased to shrill screams, which pierced one’s brain like a railway whistle. My husband, who had borne so patiently for my sake, gave in at this.

“Something must be done with this child, Mary, or I must have a separate room. I would call in some other medical man: Vaughan, I am sure, does not understand children’s ailments.”

“The doctor says there is nothing the matter with it. It’s only temper.”

“It can’t be all temper; the child must be in pain in getting its teeth. Is there no simple thing to rub its gums with?”

“I should be afraid to use anything——”

“Afraid be hanged! I’m sure my mother used something for all her children. Has nurse Adams never been near you since she left? She must know how to stop this yelling.”

Here the child’s screams were almost beyond bearing, so that Arthur snatched up his hat and went out. I was getting somewhat hardened; my love for my child was literally dying out; now, as I held him, I almost shook him. Glad am I now that it was only “almost.”

“Please, ma’am, the lady, ma’am, from next door thinks she can stop the baby’s screaming,” said our untidy Susan, opening the door.

I look round the littered apartment, not heeding my own disordered attire, and was going to say that I could not see her, when one of the sweetest faces for an old lady I had ever seen presented itself. I was prepared to encounter the Mrs. Carter I knew, a gossiping run-about body, but I was taken by surprise at this pleasant vision of an old lady of between sixty and seventy. My confusion was manifest as I rose from my low chair, holding the still screaming child, now almost convulsed, in my arms.

She quietly took him from me, saying, so pleasantly—

“I am used to children; you are not. I came up yesterday to pay my son and his wife a visit, and I must confess that I had a sleepless night,

for my room is contiguous to yours, and in these thin-walled houses one hears everything."

With the authority of knowledge, she handled the child in a manner very different from mine. He, like a restive horse which knows its rider, seemed to feel the difference, or else was at that moment exhausted. She put her finger inside his mouth, which he heartily clenched.

"This is rather serious," she said. "No wonder the child screams so. Has the doctor ever examined his gums?"

"Two months since he did, when he said the fretfulness proceeded from temper."

"But what about the screams?"

"I have not seen him since."

"If you will send for a little pure honey (an ounce will do) and get your chemist to put in it a teaspoonful of poppy syrup—or rather I will go for it myself."

She opened the blankets, and laid the child carefully down, putting the corner of one over his head. I said—

"Better let me have him."

"Not for the world," she hastily replied. "He has been too much in the arms already. Just fancy," she said smiling, "if you were racked with the toothache how you would like to have your head bumped on somebody's knees, and be turned and twisted in every direction. That child feels as much as you would. May I ask who is your medical attendant? I will call upon him and say that his attention will be required here."

I gave her the needed information, and saw her depart with a feeling of relief to which I had been many a day a stranger, and, wonder of wonders, the child was quiet.

Mrs. Carter presently returned, saying that the doctor would come in the evening, and with her remedy we should do very well till he came. The child still slept, and, oh! this interval of peace, how precious it was! We entered into conversation, during which my newly-acquired friend insensibly led me to relate the details of my infant's management.

"You will know better in time," said she. "And now I must leave you. If baby wakes do not take him out of his warm nest, but raise him gently, not uncovering his head, and give him a teaspoonful of castor-oil, then turn him gently over on his other side, and don't feed him for an hour afterwards."

"And what am I to do with the honey and poppy syrup?"

"Do nothing. I will take it away for fear of mischief. The doctor will come in the evening and lance his gums, which is really necessary, from mismanagement. I do not approve of this operation, but the child will have convulsions without it. When the doctor comes send for me, and by no means remove the child off the bed, but keep it warm. I dare say the medicine will cause it pain and it will cry; then alter its position, sometimes raising the pillow with your arm under it, and again lowering it; but don't remove it from the blankets, not even to feed it. Promise me that you will manage this."

"This I will thankfully promise, and offer a thousand thanks for your kindness."

It was as if the child was aware his comforter was going, for upon this he set up a scream, which promptly brought Mrs. Carter to his side. The cry made me nervous and fidgetty, while she was cool and collected, and merely turned him over on his other side. She then mixed a teaspoonful of oil with a little milk, put it into a small clean bottle, and so patiently let it run from the bottle into his mouth—her arm under the pillow lifting him. He had nearly taken it all before he discovered that it was other than his usual food: then the cry was fearful, but his determined friend patiently bore it, and immediately he ceased to cry she gave him the remainder, and held him on the pillow till all danger of sickness ceased. Not long after this he fell asleep. Mrs. Carter, on leaving, said—

"He is warm and comfortable; do not fuss over him, but attend to his requirements without taking him in your arms."

The remainder of this day was the most comfortable I had passed for many weeks. I began to reason with myself upon the matter. Why had I not the sense to reflect that carrying a child in the arms to meet every draught was likely to give it pain? When I had suffered from tooth-ache even the whisking of a cloth increased my agony. How much more with a delicate infant must the pain be doubled! Mrs. Carter came with the doctor in the evening. The latter said laughingly, as though he would not give offence--

"This would not have happened, my dear lady, with a more experienced mother than yourself; but unless infants are carefully tended, the bowels kept in a proper state, and the teeth helped to cut their way through the gums, these will inevitably get hard and swollen, and fever, and frequently convulsions, ensue. Babies shouldn't be nursed in the arms. Keep them warm, feed them regularly—regularly mind, not at one hour to-day and another to-morrow; they mustn't acquire the irregular habits of medical men so early; and, above all things, keep down fever by giving a teaspoonful now and then of castor-oil."

Thus he went on, mingling covert reproof with useful advice, busying himself meanwhile with his horrid-looking lancets. White and trembling, I turned sick as I fancied the blood already round the mouth of my darling.

"Dear me!" the doctor exclaimed, "I left in your son's drawing-room my right case of instruments. Would you, my dear Mrs. Norton, kindly go yourself for them? I would ask Mrs. Carter to do so, but I'm afraid her knee won't permit her; and don't send that stupid downstairs, she'll drop them and ruin me."

Without a thought, I went on the errand, which kept young Mrs. Carter and myself twenty minutes in unsuccessful search, when Susan came to say that the doctor had found what he wanted in his coat pocket. I hastened back to find I had been kindly hoaxed, and spared much distress. My boy was awake, and evidently relieved and quiet. I went to take him up; the doctor's warning finger was on my arm as my husband entered the room. He turned pale, and made scarcely more than one stride from the door to the bed, when, seeing the child awake and quiet, he turned round with a gesture of inquiry, which the doctor answered.

"All right, my dear sir. Your child will be twice the boy by to-morrow, if we can but keep him out of Mrs. Norton's arms. He has been too much cared for in one way, and not enough in another, but he'll do by-and-bye. Where's his cot? We'll put him into that."

"He sleeps with us," I hastened to reply.

"That'll never do—never. What rest will either you or Mr. Norton get? None—none. It's bad for the child, too. I thought nurse Adams never allowed this sort of thing."

"Nor did she, doctor, but my wife altered her plan of letting him sleep in a bed by himself."

"Ah, well, musn't tell tales; we are all like Adam, and blame our wives, from the first Adam downwards. However, there's no great harm done yet. You've got a something to make a bed of close to yours?"

"But as I am going to sleep in another room it can make no difference," said my husband.

"Never do that, my dear sir; the child will be quiet enough now, and I will look in to-morrow. Mrs. Carter, I am sure, will manage for you in some way."

The doctor left, and Mrs. Carter did manage exactly as nurse Adams had done. I fed him twice in the night, and whether he had a sleeping draught or not I never knew, but he did not disturb us, and my husband's slumber was unbroken. Mrs. Carter came in the morning and pronounced favourably for the patient. He cried a little upon being washed and dressed. I laughingly said I thought her grave manner had an effect upon him.

"It is quite true; from the moment a child takes notice it should be taught by the mother to understand her ways and motions, and it should never be capriciously treated—fondled and caressed at one moment, or treated harshly the next. Children have more sense than you imagine."

"But surely a twelvemonth is old enough to commence to bring them into order; they cannot understand before that age."

"You are mistaken. A twelvemonth is just nine months too long. An infant of three months old knows quite well when it sees the nurse take up its food; it recognises its mother from a stranger, and is wise enough in much else. So if you want to live in peace, and with the love of your child—a love which should be life-long—rule it from its earliest infancy by gentle but firm tones; and when it is old enough to understand words, never by entreaty or otherwise go from your word once pledged, either to reward or punish, even if your own judgment condemn you in your spoken resolve. You must guard against hasty decisions, but teach your children to obey without question."

"I shall gossip here too long. Here is the poppy syrup and honey. I don't think it will now be needed, but if it should—that is, if the child drivels very much and bites its fists—just dip your middle finger in the mixture, let the liquid run off nearly dry, then rub the gums with it. It will soon give relief, but must not be too frequently used. And I am just reminded that the india-rubber ring which I saw yesterday tied round baby's waist is not pleasant to the child, and it has a disagreeable smell."

Get a piece of orris-root from the chemist's, bore a hole through it with a gimlet, tie a piece of tape or ribbon into the hole to form a loop, then tie the ends round the child's waist. The more the child bites this the better for the gums, and the more fragrance the root diffuses. You will think me very intrusive, dear Mrs. Norton," she continued, "but I would do away with a cotton bib, always hanging wet round an infant's neck, which frequently gives cold either on the chest or gums. Get some fine Welsh flannel, cut out the bib, vandyke the edge, and overcast it with white silk, twist, or coarse sewing silk, and let it be changed as often as needed; they are easily washed, dried, and pressed under a weight without trouble. I would also exchange his cambric nightcap, with all the stiff frilling, for a plain one of the thinnest flannel, which, scalloped and embroidered, really looks pretty."

"Mrs. Harford," I interrupted, "will not allow her children to wear caps."

"No, not children; but tender infants certainly should. Half the suffering which delicate babes experience in earache, gatherings in the head, and painful swollen gums, arises from this bare exposure of their tender heads. All children are not alike; some can bear this rough usage, but most cannot. One mode of treatment will not do for all children. Some require more medicine than others, but I never recommend administering anything but castor-oil in minute and, if necessary, frequent doses. I do not even tolerate magnesia, unless the child be upwards of a year old. I recollect the case of my second child, Edmund. He was brought to me one morning with the joint of his elbow very much swollen. I instantly concluded that his nurse, a girl of twenty, had bruised the arm, or lain upon it at night, or twisted it in some way; this she strenuously denied. We called in medical advice. The doctor was of the same opinion; she was therefore discharged. The arm was bound up in splints, but it did not mend, and in the course of a week the other arm swelled in the same way. The doctor then pronounced the disease to be scrofula, and ordered sulphur baths, and the child to be taken to the sea.

"The girl I summarily dismissed was recalled, for I had always found her kind and attentive, and she never neglected her charge. That very day an old friend called on me—one, by-the-bye, who had never had children. She examined the arm, and said, 'Give him a very small teaspoonful of castor-oil nightly for a week, which cannot hurt.' This was done, and repeated at an interval of a week, when both arms were well, and the child was never attacked afterwards.

"Of course, my dear, you cannot be expected to know much about children's ailments, or how to treat them, but every mother who does saves her husband's purse, and herself a world of anxiety and uneasiness."

"When I married I never dreamed of the responsibility which would devolve on me," I remarked.

"Very seldom a girl does, and it is not now the fashion to educate young ladies for their future vocation, I am sorry to say. Of the duties of household management, or of the expenditure of a fixed and small

income, they are wholly ignorant. Therefore, when they marry, experience has to be attained at the cost of domestic comfort, and scarcely ever do they know how to treat young children, either ill or well. The doctor is summoned for every trifle—a practice leading very much to debt. In all serious cases call for help; but if a child have a bilious attack, or an ordinary cold, or chilblains, the responsibility should not be shifted from the mother's to the doctor's hands. I know how it was when I first married, and most young mothers are as ignorant as I was."

"But you would certainly have medical advice in cases of small-pox, measles, and whooping cough?"

"Small-pox cases would seldom arise if the mother saw that her child was properly vaccinated, and a doctor would be necessary in all these cases, yet she should know something of the management necessary to each. Small-pox requires cool treatment, measles warm, while in whooping cough fresh air, but always at one temperature, is absolutely necessary; so also are minute and frequent doses of ipecacuanha, as well as attention to the bowels."

"I scarcely understand you about the fresh air."

"I will endeavour to explain. A child leaves its bedroom in the morning, which perhaps is at 60 degrees; it should be taken to another room of the same temperature, and here the air should again be changed in three hours; in the bedroom, where the fresh outer air has been admitted freely through the day by the window and open door, with a fire the air should be again warmed to 60 degrees; always taking care that the child be well covered from draughts or colder or hotter air during the journeys from one room to the other."

"What a pity we are not taught such knowledge when we are young and unmarried!" I exclaimed.

"I think, with you, that it is so, and I am quite sure if a little of the time which is now devoted to accomplishments, never in after-life practised, were given to the acquirement of simple information upon domestic matters and medical ethics, children generally would be healthier and homes happier."

"Every mother should know the mode of treatment and the use of remedies for simple or other ailments. I do not mean that a woman is to qualify herself for a medical practitioner, but I do say she ought to be equal to the management of her children in their infancy without further advice. She should also look after the *drains* of the house, for a fertile source of mischief and sickness lies here. Mention to nineteen women out of twenty that a drain in the house is offensive, or there is a great prevalence of 'essence of sink,' probably each will reply, 'Yes, but I can't help it.' By-and-bye her children sicken one after another, her husband gets up with a headache, his temper becomes variable and irritable, and she herself is weighed down with lassitude and weariness. If she be an ignorant woman, but of religious spirit, and her children or husband be snatched by death from her, she will after a time say, 'It pleased God to afflict me.' Ah! my dear lady,

Our afflictions oft in ourselves do lie
Which we ascribe to Heaven."

"But about the drain, dear Mrs. Carter? Excuse me for interrupting you, but I am really anxious to benefit by your teaching."

"In modern-built houses for families of a small income all the details which preserve health or promote comfort are shamefully neglected. The kitchen sink and closet drains are untrapped, and thus the poisonous smell enters into the house, introducing scarlet and low fevers, sore throat, diphtheria, cholera, and stomach derangement, producing nervous irritability. 'Tis true if the sink trap be kept down by the servants the smell is kept out, but do they ever attend to this? Never. The refuse water will run down quicker if the trap be up, and it saves them trouble. A great deal of the illness of servants, too, arises from this cause; yet the matter is never cared for. Now let a mistress be ever so heedful about all other household management, this one should be her chief—to insist upon it, and to see that the brass trap of the sink is always on; that the covers of all other closets in or out of the house be kept down; that no stale or dirty water or vegetable matter be kept in the house, or water in which vegetables have been boiled be thrown down the drain; and that all sink and closet drains be flushed with a continuous stream of water for five minutes three times a week. Remember that although the effluvia might not be perceptible on the ground floor, yet odours, whether disagreeable or fragrant, always ascend; and infants or invalids, while quietly slumbering in unconsciousness of the invisible foe, are breathing the vapours which may place them in the arms of death."

"Then what cares a girl takes upon herself when she marries!"

"No girl thinks of that. She looks to have her own way, to be petted, to have money to spend and fine dresses to wear, and to parade the accomplishments she may possess in parties at home and abroad. Her first child is sometimes found in the way, and the worry of her servants a perpetual blister, though the best and most conscientious woman now-a-days cannot emancipate herself from the latter infliction."

"All this was foreign to my purpose to have entered upon, but somehow it arose out of children's ailments. But about weaning your babe, when do you intend it?"

"I have never suckled it, but children are generally weaned at twelve-months old, are they not?"

"I always fancied eight months long enough: infants do not remember so long at this early age. But it depends upon the strength of constitution of the mother: a child will suck disease from a sickly mother at the expense of its own life; therefore she must be the best judge of the proper time. At the period in the day at which a child is usually suckled it should be fed from a bottle with good milk slightly sweetened, but by no means permitted to have too much. An hour after this give it a little food of gruel or fine oatmeal boiled well in water, then sweetened and cooled with milk. A change of diet is as necessary for infants as for adults. Sifted bread crumbs nicely boiled in water, sweetened and then cooled with milk, and biscuits, sold for the purpose and soaked, are excellent. Beware of stuffing the child with too much food at one time or by giving it too often. Every three hours through the day a small quantity will suffice, extending to four

hours in the evening, lastly feeding it at ten, and again at four in the morning. Children are early awake, but after this most infants will sleep on till eight o'clock; a small feeding will then suffice before its morning bathing and dressing, after which it may be fully fed."

"How very quietly my boy now sleeps! It was fortunate indeed that his gums were lanced. I cannot sufficiently thank you."

"It was fortunate, or the child might have had convulsions from the irritation. You must gently rub his gums with your finger. The honey will prevent soreness from the rubbing, and the poppy syrup will soothe. The latter, you are aware, is a narcotic, and, though valuable in its use, its abuse would be very hurtful."

"What is the reason that for the last ten days or more my darling could never bear the light? He always turned fretful if a candle was suddenly shown to him."

"This was the result of uneasy sensations, the forerunners of a fit, and usually accompanied by sickness and a confined state of the bowels—also drowsiness."

"Ah! he had not this symptom."

"No, but he had unquiet uneasy sleep, and was very feverish. Fits are sad things for children, and there is more than one kind of convulsion. Sometimes a fit will come upon a previously healthy child, and is the symptom of fever, or measles, or other complaint coming on. Then instant recourse should be had to a hot bath, and medical advice obtained. The brain is always more or less affected by fits, and they are beyond a mother's power to cure, or even, in many instances, to alleviate; the excessive pain of teething, and sometimes worms, will bring them on. The causes of infants' diseases are not thoroughly understood. The brain is often the seat of the mischief. Some have a frequent sickness, which is often attributed to a stomach disordered from food or drink; but it is irritation of the nerves of the stomach, which are affected by the brain, that causes the vomiting. A mother cannot cure these ailments, or distinguish their origin; but she should be able to nurse her infant in the best possible manner, and never for a moment delegate so sacred a duty to a servant's hands. Sick infants are very susceptible of sound. A child will start and cry out in its sleep if a sudden noise startle it; therefore, by all means, insist upon quiet. In all cases in every sick room avoid whispering, moving about in creaking shoes, or a rustling dress. Never fidget anything about, but at once put it in the desired place. Do not meddle with the fireirons, but pick up and put on coal with the fingers if needed. Keep a darkened, not a dark room. Do not muffle up the patient, young or old, with curtains, and let the face be always turned from the window or light. Let the bedclothes be light and warm—as many blankets as needed, but banish all heavy coverings. Let the air of the room be kept at one temperature, regulated by a thermometer at from 60 to 70 degrees. See that the windows do not rattle, nor the door shut badly; and there are a hundred other little things which a careful nurse will heed."

"I hope my boy will never have fits. I think I should die if I saw him so suffering."

"That would be exceedingly foolish, because a fit might come on at any moment—the effort of some hidden disease to develope itself. The appearance of small-pox is often preceded by a fit. In my young days children were frequently marked with this dreadful scourge; indeed, I had a brother who was nine days blind with it. The sad disfigurement caused to the face is often appalling. Should your child be visited by such a calamity, I will give you a remedy I read of the other day in a useful little work.* Mix dissolved gum-arabic with honey, and sufficient lamp-black to blacken the whole mixture. Then with a camel's hair brush paint over every pustule or spot. It is said to be the light which aggravates the disease. This is a simple matter to recollect as a treatment—fresh cool air, almost darkness, and proper medicines."

"I hope never to have such afflictions in my family as the small-pox, or even diphtheria."

"A mother should be prepared to meet this last deadly foe. The remedy which Dr. Allnat, of Frant, prescribes is this:—

Take four drachms (or a quarter of an ounce) of the *chlorate of potassa*, pour upon it a pint of boiling water, and stir it well; then put it in a bottle and closely cork it, to be ready for use when needed. Then it should be well shaken, and a teaspoonful be administered three times daily.

"The only way to meet dreaded and unavoidable evils is to be prepared for them. A knowledge of how to treat a disease is half its cure. I have long overstayed my time, and perhaps wearied you. Your boy will do very well now. So farewell, dear Mrs. Norton, till I pay another visit to my son, for I leave this afternoon."

CHAPTER II.

THE CROUP AND ITS TREATMENT—TEACHING INFANTS TO WALK—
HOW THEIR LEGS BECOME CROOKED—NERVOUS CHILDREN—
VENTILATION AND LIGHT NECESSARY FOR THEM.

OUR home was getting to be a very pleasant one, with one exception. I kept the babe up till late, instead of putting him to rest early, as my friend had strictly enjoined me. There was selfishness on my part in this: the child amused me on the evenings when my husband was necessarily absent, and the consequence was broken rest to us all till past midnight. Seeing evil consequences arising, I endeavoured to remedy it. But from a manageable infant three months had converted him into an obstinate child, who knew his power, and was fully determined to exercise it. My husband counselled firmness, and I dreaded to disobey, notwithstanding the passionate screams of the child.

* "Woman's Work, or How she can Help the Sick." Griffith and Farran, London.

Evening after evening I sat beside his cot, unwilling to leave him, and if for a moment I was deluded into the belief of his sleeping, a sudden flinging off the clothes and a sharp cry revealed my mistake.

"Mary, you must break him in," said my husband one evening. "Just put him to bed at seven o'clock and leave him."

This was fatal advice, but I followed it. My heart bled while I heard the screams, but my husband's stern look kept me from going to him. After a time all was still. I went on tiptoe to the room. My child was asleep, but he had thrown his bedclothes off, although the night was cold and frosty. I hastened to replace them, and observed that his little face was flushed, and the tears were yet undried on his cheeks. It were vain to tell how I reproached myself for my babe's sorrow. It was I who had caused it. Had his management been different, he would not have suffered.

He awoke on our going to bed, and, taking him up to feed him, I observed that he had a little cough, which I had not noticed before. However, nothing was thought of it, and he was laid down again. Towards morning we were startled by a most extraordinary noise, something between a cough and the crow of a chicken, proceeding from the cot. It was but a moment's work to spring out of bed, but the child did not awake, and was quiet otherwise than that his little arms were tossed outside the clothes, and the flush was deeper. He breathed, too, hard and slowly.

"I am afraid that Dot" (it was his pet name) "has taken cold, Willie," I said to my dozing husband. "Didn't you hear his cough?"

"Nonsense; I heard nothing so peculiar that it should frighten you."

I altered the position of baby's head, and he seemed to breathe more easily, but there was no more rest for me. As soon as I could I rose and took him. Alas! alas! it was the dreaded croup, which I had been warned was so fatal. Medical assistance was speedily summoned. Oh! the terrible cough which rang through my ears like a brazen trumpet, then again like a crow, hoarse and dissonant; and there I sat, holding the little sufferer, but powerless to give relief. When the doctor arrived he looked very serious, and said—

"I dare say he will do very well by-and-bye if no symptom of a cough appeared before last night. Give me a sponge, or two will be best, about the size of my fist, and some hot water, as hot as I can bear my hand in it. Now, then, bare his throat, but keep some flannel well round him."

The doctor dipped the sponge into the water, then squeezed it half dry and applied it to the throat, and had a second sponge ready the moment one was taken off. He continued this for about twenty minutes, till the throat was quite red, and the child broke out into a profuse perspiration, which was encouraged by giving him hot milk and water. The next cough was not so ringing as before, and the breathing became less hard. That he suffered less was evinced by his falling into a deep sleep.

"Don't remove him from this room, Mrs. Norton, and keep it to the temperature of sixty-five degrees, or a little more. Keep flannel wrapped about him, and don't put calico or the like outside, but if he requires

more warmth wrap a small blanket round him. I cannot be home for four or five hours, perhaps longer. Meantime send for this" (and he wrote, Ipecacuanha wine, three drachms ; syrup of tolu, five drachms ; water, one ounce. Mix well and shake it before giving him a small teaspoonful every ten minutes until it produces sickness, and then every two hours), "and then I think the danger will be over. Don't have visitors here to-day, and especially keep off all children, for perhaps you are not aware that croup is decidedly infectious, and there is danger of one child after another falling a victim to the malady. Lay the boy carefully in his cot : it will not do for you to be hanging over him and inhaling his breath. Good morning."

"But if he should be worse, doctor, while you are gone?"

"I do not think he will be ; but if he should, give him a warm bath, and be careful in taking him up to wipe him very quickly and wrap him in flannel, and put him between blankets in his cot. I think he will do very well as it is."

When the doctor returned some hours later my darling was decidedly better.

"You see, my dear lady, that we took the disease in time and in its first stage. Had there been any delay you would have seen a very different appearance in his countenance, and instead of the hoarse crow—which, however, is not always to be depended on as a symptom of the croup, as a similar one generally accompanies the first stage of the measles—you would have scarcely heard the cough or the voice, while a wheezing respiration, pale and mottled skin, languid eyes, but with their pupils dilated, and extreme thirst would have marked a second advance of the disease, and a state from which few children recover. There is a third stage, which, when exhibited, always terminates in death.

"In all attacks of croup, the moment it is even suspected medical advice must be obtained. Four days, from the commencement of the attack till its fatal termination, is the brief space allotted for the infant's life. I do really wish mothers were educated to know the symptoms of children's diseases, and in the knowledge of applying simple alleviations. Many a child's life might thus be saved, for a medical man is not always on the spot, and sometimes cannot attend for hours. Meanwhile the mischief has become irreparable ; and too often the doctor is blamed, or confidence is lost, because he cannot work impossibilities. Hundreds of children owe their deaths to the ignorance of their mothers."

"And you think my baby will live, doctor?" I asked.

"I see no reason to think the contrary ; but he might take a turn for the worse in the evening, which perhaps will last till midnight, and this will be the precursor of the second stage of the croup, and one which I would rather not see. Do not keep the room too warm, and he must have no stimulating food. Soak a baby's biscuit in a little boiling water and sugar till it is quite soft, then fill the cup with milk, and get him to eat that, but do not let it be too warm ; or make him arrowroot jelly by mixing a spoonful of arrowroot with a little cold water, then pour on boiling water, till it forms a jelly, and give it nearly

cold. Attend to the child's bowels. I will send an aperient to be taken directly."

Under Providence my child recovered from this serious attack, which happily had no fatal result. After this I began to think my troubles from mismanagement were nearly over. Dot was just twelve months old, and was beginning to walk, though not alone. It was so weary to be stooping and holding him up that I began to look about for some easier mode of teaching him. Some of my friends advised me to tie a silk handkerchief round his waist and hold him up by the ends at the back. This plan, I found, hurt his chest very much, as he always leaned upon it and stuck his heels into the ground instead of planting his feet firmly, as a baby can do. In fact he got lazy over it, and the holding him in this manner did not relieve me. Another friend suggested that I should put him on the floor as much as possible, and let him crawl. In reply, I said I wanted him to learn to walk, and not to crawl; but as I had discovered how excessively ignorant I was in all that pertained to children, I was really anxious to get and act upon any advice without judging of the quality.

This new mode was a relief to me, certainly, and the child became highly amused, and would stay quiet for hours. He became an accomplished adept in crawling rapidly to any part of the room. He did not get on his knees, but propelled himself by the inside of his legs and ankles, in a way which will be scarcely intelligible in describing, and I soon found that one ankle became very weak. "Ah! well, there is no royal road to walking. I must put my shoulder to the work, or else the dear fellow will be lame to a certainty." There was nothing for it but with my hands under his arms to give him two or three turns across the room. I then placed him in a high chair, with a soft seat covered with flannel—not cold calico or prickly horsehair, to make the chair a torture. It had the usual flat bar which is attached to the front of all similar chairs. I found this of great benefit in giving firmness to the ankles, as when he wanted to reach a toy which might be a little out of his reach on the table he invariably, after *he was taught to do so*, stood on the bar for the purpose.

It may be asked why I did not let a girl teach him to walk. Not alone because of the expense of having a second servant, but chiefly because girls cannot be trusted. Out of sight it was easier to carry the child hanging half over the arm, with the infant's knees pressed against the girl; and thus the legs would become crooked or bowed, at which girl or boy becomes justly exasperated when grown up.

I found that by giving the child a walk for about six or seven minutes every two hours both he and myself were less fatigued. Only this trouble was entailed upon me—he was always wanting to be on his feet, and it was difficult to make him understand that this was not to be. It was nearly fifteen months before he could fully walk alone, for he was of a trembling nervous temperament. Fear seemed inherent in him by nature. I was very careful not to encourage this failing by pitying or even mentioning it before him. At the same time, I never left him in the dark, nor unheeded his calls.

I had myself been a weakly child, and to this hour can recollect the

terror with which I frequently awoke in the night, and found darkness around me—the bitter hours I passed with my head under the bed-clothes, starting at all unrecognised sounds, which seem to haunt every room between midnight and dawn. Had I seen anything unpleasant or witnessed an accident during the day, it was sure to repeat itself with additional horrors during my sleep; and so much had I suffered from this, and from the unheeding nature of the people surrounding me, that my child nature, which should have been happy and joyous, was blighted into a grave stupidity, or what passed as such, by the terrors of the night, of which I became afraid to speak. Irrespective of these reproductions of the brain, my dreams were always of a black bear hugging me so that I could not breathe, or that I was being compelled to pass through a narrow passage in which I felt stifled. Strange to say, this went on for years. I became thin, sallow, almost cadaverous. Then I was sent to a farmhouse to get country air. Here I was no longer haunted, and I rapidly regained my health; but I was no sooner home, and occupying my usual little bed, than the same terrors returned. On my mother mentioning this circumstance to a very judicious friend, whom she had not seen for years, she said at once—

"Her bedroom is badly ventilated. Is there an unclosed fireplace in it?"

"There is none at all," returned my mother.

"Ah! I thought so. Just leave the door a little way open at night, and be careful that through the day the room is kept thoroughly ventilated by having both door and window open. Moreover, do away with any carpet there may be in it, excepting a narrow strip by the bedside and before the toilet-table and washstand. Take away the counterpane from the bed, and give her an extra blanket, and let her lie between flannel instead of sheets. Let her be kept warm, but without pressure from calico or linen, which only confines the perspiration, and makes the child irritable. Also, the last thing at night go into her room with a light, tuck in the clothes, and quietly speak to her. So soething will this be that she will not wake till the morning. If she desires to have a light, give her one, but let it be placed out of the level of her eyes, and away from any draught, so that it does not fling dancing shadows over the room: outside the open door would be the best place."

Truly this friend was my guardian angel, for on her plan being adopted I had no more terrors, my nights were passed in refreshing slumbers, and by day my benumbed intellect began to awaken. I have since, through the information of an obliging medical friend, learned the cause of my early misery, independent of the want of ventilation.

"You were a child," said he, "of a highly organised nervous temperament. Even a rough wind made you shudder, and the slightest noise startled you. If any one cut a finger in your presence, you felt the wound by sympathy, which, like an electric shock, ran down your spine. Existence was doubly sweet to you in the open air, and depression arose if you were in a confined atmosphere. Your heart beat fast, very fast, and you turned pale when you were suddenly spoken to or saw a stranger. Is not this true?"

I could not but acknowledge it.

"Well, then," he continued, "stronger natures, whose nerves are of iron, who can detect no atmospheric changes, no unpleasant smells, and whom the roughest breeze and the tempestuous ocean only exhilarate, who can stand and see a limb cut off, albeit not used to such sights—such can have no sympathy with more delicate organisms than their own. How, then, can they understand their management? Why, it is moral death to a nervous child to be placed under such care. All are not born with the same temperament, or the same feelings, and so each will act differently under various influences. I do not always listen to a child who says he is afraid to stir in the dark. This cowardice is natural to children, and is best combated by an appeal to their courage, and by accompanying them in the dark, and showing them that there is no real cause for fear. But fear, in a more or less degree, will always be a part and parcel of the nature of a nervous child. And in after life, even when the terrors of childhood have been forgotten, and daily fighting with trouble and adverse circumstances has given courage, in the dead of night a shuddering terror suddenly awakens up the sleeper—at what? Nothing; and in the dark, although no thought of evil being near is indulged in, yet in a moment the terror is there, making the victim cry out for very company's sake."

All that my friend said I felt to be true, and I suspected, though he did not say so, that he, who could so well describe a nervous temperament, must himself have been a sufferer.

My husband frequently said, "Mary, the boy will be a coddle;" and another time, when shouting in an unaccustomed tone to the man who was working in the garden, Dot, who was sitting by his father's side, turned instantly pale as death, a blueness overspread his little face, and he would have fallen but for the chair. Arthur looked frightened, but said somewhat angrily, as he went out—

"This comes of coddling the child."

I clasped my darling to my breast and cooed and murmured in gentle accents over his little face, but minutes passed before he gave a heavy sob, and the large tears rolled over his cheeks; he nestled his little head in my arm and soon sunk into an uneasy slumber, in which every slight noise startled him. His father returned about an hour afterwards, and was about to make some remark, when I deprecatingly held up my finger.

"Not now, Arthur."

I suppose I looked determined, for he turned away, muttering something I was not disposed to hear. After some time the child woke up, feverish and flushed, and a little weak and trembling, but I saw no other symptoms of evil. My husband did not return for tea, and not until late in the evening, when Dot was safe in his little bed; the moment he came in he said—

"Mary, you are ruining that child. You will make a milksop of him. He is frightened at everything."

"Yes, he is so; and I fear nothing will overcome it," I replied, as calmly as I could, for I felt that he not only inherited my temperament, but my injudicious conduct before he was born had helped to foster the weakness.

"But why humour him so?"

"It is not that I humour him, because he never cries for anything; but that which you call girl's temper is nervousness. Arthur, if Dot is used roughly, or even corrected harshly, his brain will soften."

My husband stared at me as if I was a stranger.

"You seem very suddenly enlightened about the ways of children, Mary."

"Only about his nervous ways, Arthur. These I understand, for the simple reason that I can recollect my suffering from the same cause, and I know no physical pain to equal it."

"Oh! it is all nonsense talking about an infant having nerves."

"You have yourself often wondered at Dot's being so affected by a thunder-storm. There is no fear in his trembling, because he does not know it would harm him; but if he suffers as I did, I can compare it to nothing that I ever felt from other causes. The expression, 'the nerves being laid bare,' perhaps will best convey my meaning."

"Well, I can understand women's nonsense about their nerves, but not about the nerves of such a Dot as that. However, Polly, I won't shout and frighten him again."

And so the affair ended.

My little treasure became tolerably strong after the attack of croup, and could fairly run about. His lisping accents amused us both, and occasionally he would set up a joyous laugh. He became very docile, and gave me but little trouble, while he was his father's pet and play-thing. I began almost to be jealous of my child.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN INFANT IN A CHILD'S CARRIAGE—THE WHOOPING COUGH—ITS MEDICAL TREATMENT AND DIET.

ARTHUR purchased a child's carriage in the days when perambulators were not, and, under the guidance of the maid-servant, our boy was often sent out for the air. Somehow, after these excursions the little fellow looked pale and his limbs were cold, but I saw hundreds of children in their carriages, and I felt ashamed that I alone of all the mothers should be fidgety. I drove the thought from me that all was not right, but still the shadow would come. It became almost a habit every fine day after our early dinner for Hester to take him out, while I stayed at home, not thinking it prudent to leave the house. One afternoon I had omitted to send a message to the laundress by the girl when she took Dot, so I thought I would go myself, and in turning down a squalid street, where children were industriously making dirt pies, and grottoes of oyster-shells, and two boys were flinging cabbage-stalks at each other from a heap of refuse which stood on one side of the road, suddenly my steps were rooted to the ground; for there,

under a window, and in a patch of what had been a turf garden, was my boy asleep in his carriage, in the shade, and in a cold cutting wind, while a long-legged pig was rooting with its snout in the wraps which covered the child. I could see through the window into the room, where, gathered at tea, was a noisy party, composed of an old woman, Hester, and a companion or two, and several dirty children of both sexes, with elflike locks of hair, begrimed faces, and tattered clothes.

I caught the whole scene at a glance, and it was but the work of an instant to snatch up the child and to call the girl. Meantime the gaunt pig had found what he was in search of, for a small loaf dropped as I took a shawl out of the carriage. I did not speak, but went up the steps and into the room. Hester cried out, "Oh, lor!" I was pale as a corpse, and could scarcely articulate, "Leave this, and come home instantly."

The old woman hastened to say that Hester had come to see her mother, who was down at Mr. Turnbull's, nursing his children, "as they was all down in the measles, an' she hadn't been there a minnit."

This news made me hasten my steps. I carried Dot home, and Hester dragged the carriage after her, not offering a word in explanation, but completely subdued, while the child, with his characteristic nervousness, looked white and trembling. When I reached home I was breathless with anger. I asked her how often she had gone there, and judge my dismay when her reply was, "Only four or five times," which I believe meant every day.

"And why did you disobey me? I thought you had no friends here."

"I only had granny, mum, till the last month, when mother come up to see her, and then she was sent for to the Lodge, 'cause she lived with Mrs. Turnbull afore she was married, and three of the children is down with the measles."

"And how dare you go anywhere in the hope of seeing your mother? Don't you know that my child might take the disease?" I asked, as well as my combined tears and indignation would permit.

"I didn't know as how they was catchin', mum, and mother haven't got 'em."

I turned away. What was the use of expostulating with this lump of cunning and seeming ignorance?—for ignorant she was not; that I could see. As I was undressing Dot I bethought me to ask, "Whose children were all those I saw there?"

"Granny keeps a school, mum."

"Keeps a what?" I shouted, rather than asked.

"There's lots of wimmen, mum, goes out to work, and granny gets tuppence a week for keeping the children."

And to this place my child was taken daily, to catch every disease that dirt and contact could communicate. The girl was hard-working and civil; I did not wish to send her away; but no more afternoon ramblings with Dot for her companion. "These stupid girls!" I thought. "How I envy those who can afford to keep expensive nurses!"

Ah! I was only dissatisfied with my own position because I then knew no other.

My sweet boy suffered no inconvenience; he prattled away in the rose-bloom of health, and was fast stealing our hearts from all else. When two years old he was attacked by a slight cough, which I unheeded at first, but soon the unmistakable whoop was heard. In alarm I sent off to Dr. Vaughan, who, however, was attending a patient many miles distant. Almost immediately nurse Adams called. After the first greetings I directed her attention to the child, who was playing about, and exhibiting no signs of the complaint. Presently the cough came on, the whoop sounded, the saliva ran from the mouth, and retching commenced. Nurse quietly took him up. "Don't be alarmed," she said. "There is nothing here but what we can manage; it has not gone too far yet. How long has he had a cough?"

"About ten days, but I did not hear the peculiar whoop till within the last few hours, when I immediately sent for Dr. Vaughan; but he is not at home."

"I will go to the druggist's and get sufficient ipecacuanha wine for him to take to bring up the phlegm, and a little Dover's powder for the night, and I think he will do very well."

"But how much will you get? Will it make him very sick?" I asked.

"I have nursed several children in the whooping cough, and the medicine I shall get for your baby I have given to many others. It is one drachm of ipecacuanha wine in a little water once a day for three successive days. This will make him sick. Then two grains of Dover's powder every other night, but only if he is restless. Then in the morning a little Gregory's powder."

"Supposing that your remedies fail, and Dr. Vaughan does not return, what shall we do?" I asked. "Would you give him a mustard plaster?"

"I do not think I should. He is such a nervous child that, instead of soothing him or relieving the irritation of his chest, it will only make him irritable. Indeed, ma'am, though I have heard they are very safe things, I do not think they are in all cases. I mean to say that the burning sensation, without the relief of heat, which they sometimes give, sends the blood to the head, and does a deal of mischief. However, the medicine must be got, and as speedily as possible."

When nurse returned I had made up my mind to ask her to stay. Mr. Norton had gone from home for a few days, and I feared to have the responsibility of curing the child resting with myself alone. I had no confidence in any other medical man than Dr. Vaughan, and he was absent at what I supposed a critical point in my child's complaint. Upon some solicitation nurse Adams consented to stay a week, until my husband returned.

"I have had a mixture put up to rub his chest with, besides having brought the medicine. I asked them to write it down for me. It is excellent for rubbing into the chest, even in a common cough," said nurse.

I opened and read the prescription, albeit it was one of her own nostrums.

Rubbing mixture :—

Half an ounce of oil of amber, half an ounce of oil of cloves, one ounce of olive oil, and two teaspoonfuls of laudanum.

Certainly I found it efficacious in relieving the soreness of which the little fellow complained, and I give it here in the hope that others may be benefited. Dot improved under nurse's care, for she would not permit him to have any solid food, but fed him on barley-water diet and whey. Every other day, instead of the whey, he had a tablespoonful of strong beef-tea, with toasted bread in it. Sometimes the barley was made into a pudding, and he rarely had anything but thin barley-water to drink. At first, and before I learned to make and to appreciate its qualities, I thought it was hard lines for my child, but I soon found both the pudding and the barley-water delicious. I mixed in a basin a tablespoonful, piled, of the prepared barley powder to a paste, with a little cold water. Into a quart of boiling water in a saucepan I threw not quite two ounces of loaf sugar and a tablespoonful of lemon juice, free from pip or rind ; then, with this boiling, I mixed up the cold paste, returned it to the saucepan, and boiled it for twenty minutes ; then strained it into a jug, and poured it again into another, and so continued till it was quite cold. I then bottled it in a white bottle and corked it, and when the child wanted to drink a small quantity was poured out, and he drank it with a marvellous soothing effect.

The pudding was made by washing three times in boiling water two ounces of Scotch barley, then boiling it in milk, with a grate of nutmeg and some loaf sugar, for two hours. It was then put in a dish in the oven to bake for half an hour, and when it was wanted a piece was cut out and slightly warmed.

The whey was prepared by boiling sweetened milk, and when at the boiling point adding a little sherry to turn it. The curd was then strained away. It was made only when wanted. Roasted apples, sago, and tapioca puddings were given to him, and this diet varied with several farinaceous puddings, but which never contained eggs.

By the aid of these remedies and judicious diet my boy was greatly relieved of the distressing spasms which always accompany the complaint, though no effort of ours could expedite the cure. It seemed as if, for a certain time, the tenacious and obstinate cough would never yield. All we could do was to prevent inflammation, by sparingly giving food, by not keeping the room hotter than 65 degrees, and changing the air frequently—that is, the room the child slept in was kept to 65 degrees. He was washed and dressed in this room, and then well wrapped up and taken into another, where the fresh morning air had been admitted, and warmed by the fire to the same temperature as the room he left. Then the sleeping room was thoroughly ventilated through the day, and warmed to 65 degrees at night ; but the child was undressed in the sitting-room, and he was laid in blankets—not sheets—in his bed. He got well without relapse upon this treatment, and when Dr. Vaughan saw him weeks after the attack came on he was much surprised at the cure we had effected.

"All he wants now," said he, "is change of air. Let nurse take him

out of town for a week or so. 'He will then entirely lose the irritability in his throat.'

My mind did not misgive me in entrusting my boy to nurse Adams, and she justified our confidence in returning him to us in blooming health.

CHAPTER IV.

CONDUCT BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THE SECOND CHILD—A CURE FOR SICKNESS—BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM EXERCISE, AIR, AND FOOD.

DOT was three years old before his sister came to divide and yet increase our love. My little daughter was born the healthiest of infants, and one of the quietest that ever blessed a mother's pains. Perhaps this happy result arose from my own management of myself before her birth. For I suffered, as with Dot, greatly from sickness, and this threatened to prostrate me physically, while my moral resolutions were nearly given to the winds, till seeing one sickly infant by my side, and with the prospect of bearing another, made me resolve to allay, and, if possible, conquer this mother's malady. After the first fit of sickness I was recommended to take an effervescing draught, with the smallest quantity, less than half a drop, of prussic acid in it—of course I did not venture to mix it for myself, but had it from the chemist's. If I was up and dressed when the sickness came on, or still in bed, I did not move about, but remained quiet for two hours. My sickness did not come on usually till after breakfast, and then it was very dreadful. I found an excellent remedy in eating only thin dry toast, and sipping my tea by spoonfuls. Sometimes all appetite was gone, and nothing would remain on the stomach. I then had nice gruel made, with a very little salt in it (though this diet I abhorred when in health), and I took a teaspoonful at a time—not more—at intervals of ten minutes. At another time, as all that I took habitually disagreed with me in the end, I tried milk in the same way, and, thus alternating, succeeded in greatly subduing the sickness. Strange to say, the acidity of the stomach, which would frequently arise, was corrected by the milk. I studiously avoided all spirits, wine, and beer, for I had a dread that the desire of one day would the next lead to a craving, and that my child in its future might be influenced by my want of self-control before its birth, and so become a drunkard. I don't know how far I was justified in thus thinking, nor can I tell this now.

I do not say but that in heavy atmospheres stimulants may be necessary, though I would caution every mother to abstain, if she can, from them altogether; and if not wholly, to take so much only as may be absolutely necessary.

After the first conquered wish for stimulants I ceased to desire them, and soon got to loathe even the smell. I drank pure good milk, which Dr. Vaughan had told me to give Dot, instead of tea, coffee, or beer. He said that the composition of milk was such that it was capable of supporting animal life without any other food, telling me, also, at the same time, how it formed blood and bone, earth, and the salts necessary to keep up the natural waste of flesh. I do not recollect all he said upon the subject, but remembered sufficient to induce me to adopt it as an article of diet for myself and children, though I will not deny that it was very difficult at first to abstain from tea, of which I was unduly fond, and the use of which I would not acknowledge had anything to do with my too frequent restless sleepless nights. But it certainly had a power upon me, as it has upon inanimate objects; for I have since discovered tea to be a most powerful detergent for cleaning polished furniture, *varnished* prints, oil-paintings, and smoke-grimed windows. Now here the effect is palpable, even with tea of the weakest kind, and if it does not act upon the stomach in a similar way, it certainly renders some of the nerves exceedingly irritable. I have often looked at Dot, seen him quiver from the slightest noise, and wondered if in the days before he was born my inordinate love of tea had evilly influenced him.

I overcame the irritability of the stomach by very moderate eating. I avoided taking any meat after seven o'clock in the evening. I took constant but moderate exercise in the open air, and avoided much running about in the house, as this gave fatigue, without my being able to recover rapidly from it. I ate meat and vegetables, but gave up pastry, even farinaceous puddings made with eggs: these gave me an excess of bile. I cannot say this was no deprivation, for pastry was more tempting to me than anything else, excepting tea; but I soon got accustomed to it, and, what is more, became quite an expert in making milk puddings without eggs. Besides, the latter induced constipation, to which the cooked milk sometimes added. For this I took every night a teaspoonful of castor-oil in a little cold water, and after a time, as this nauseated on the stomach, I took the not unpleasant medicine of sulphate of magnesia and infusion of roses every morning early. I made it myself by procuring a quarter of an ounce of damask rose leaves and two ounces of loaf sugar, and pouring on a pint of boiling water; after stirring and letting it stand for two hours I put into a bottle one ounce of sulphate of magnesia, and strained the infusion to this. After shaking it up well it was ready for use; a wine-glass three parts full was a dose.

I had a great dread of sore nipples, for I had seen two sad instances; but recently I had met with a charming Norwegian lady friend, who got two large nutmegs, and scooped them out like a thimble, then put them into brandy for a week, and afterwards dried them. The breasts were rubbed every morning with glycerine, and the nipples washed over with brandy, and, when dry, the nutmegs were placed one on each nipple. This drew them out, and sufficiently hardened them till baby was born. Only I should remark that all this was done by the fire, and where the patient could not possibly take cold.

When the period for my confinement arrived, to my surprise, my

sufferings were much less than at the birth of Dot, and on asking nurse the reason, she said, almost sharply I thought—

"Because exercise in the fresh air, good food, and self-control have made you strong and happy."

"But, nurse," I said, "women do suffer in childbirth, and can't help it."

"Yes, they do, vast numbers; but my grandfather, who was a doctor, used to say in one half the instances it was owing to an artificial life before marriage—late hours, late rising, taking no exercise, and pinching their waists; and the other half suffered through their own mothers' conduct before they were born."

I winced at this, for Dot was playing near me, and I never could satisfy myself that I had not in some measure been the cause of his delicacy of constitution.

When my precious little daughter, who was the picture of all loveliness and health, was about eight months old she and Dot caught the measles. How, I could not tell. Dr. Vaughan said, when called in, "The sooner children's diseases are over the better. I don't like them coming on late in life. Fancy a big fellow with the 'thrush,' or this little angel here falling ill with the measles on her wedding day." And the good doctor laughed long and heartily. I hated him for the moment, for there had my children been shivering with the cold, and were now crying out with heat, thirst, and languor, and their eyes running with water, then sneezing. I thought I was about to lose them, and so I said.

"Nonsense!" replied the doctor. "They will do very well. Tomorrow, perhaps, you will observe, first on the forehead and face, and then over the whole body, a dusky red eruption, which will gradually group itself into crescent-shaped spots, the skin appearing white between. After three days these spots will disappear, but leave a disagreeable itching, which you may allay by powdering with violet powder, or you may sponge with a little tepid vinegar and water, but I don't like it so well."

"But you will give them some medicine, doctor?" I asked.

"No, I do not think I shall. As long as you keep the bowels open, and not give them their usual food, but plenty of warm milk and water, and as many roasted apples as you like, they will be all right. Only keep the room moderately warm. Whatever you do, don't let them be chilled, either by a draught in this room, or by going into another of a colder temperature, or by contact with cold bedclothes. Be sure that they have an equable warmth—not one hour hot and the next cold. Remember that children sick in the measles should be kept tolerably warm, while in the small-pox the air which surrounds them should be cold rather than warm."

"But what medicine shall I give them if they need it?" I asked.

"Castor-oil is the safest, or a little Gregory's powder; but I prefer the oil. Give baby a teaspoonful, and the boy two. What is his name? For I have never heard him called other than 'Dot.'"

"His name is John; he was christened after my father."

I was not quite satisfied with the off-hand way Dr. Vaughan treated my children's malady; and as he was going away I said—

"Would you tell me, doctor, if the measles are dangerous?"

"Yes, certainly, in some cases; but then the simple eruption you may expect to see to-morrow, if dangerous, quickly assumes a livid hue, alternately reviving and disappearing, and this is what mothers call the measles 'going in,' and which really is much to be dreaded, as the disease frequently merges into putrid fever when this is the case. However, be under no alarm. Your children's blood is sweet and pure—it has not been poisoned by wine or beer. But one thing I would say: do not let them attach any importance to this illness. You must laugh it off, and they will soon be well. Otherwise, their spirits will get depressed, and mischief will arise, notwithstanding every favourable symptom. Be under no alarm; I will come in each day as I pass, till they are well. It is probable that Master Dot may have a cough—I think he will—but then it will be more troublesome to him than of any consequence."

So saying, the good doctor took his leave. At the end of the week the worst symptoms were over. The measles came out, and did not "go in," and by this time the children's skins were moist, and they had evidently rallied.

"Now," said Dr. Vaughan, "you must give them stronger food—some beef-tea and bread is excellent."

"But," I remarked, "baby has never had anything but milk and biscuit."

"Well, then, let her continue milk—no water with it, mind; but give both all the nourishing diet you can."

This was attended to, and the children grew apace. My little daughter!—a mother likes to call her child "daughter;" she seems thereby to acquire a fresh dignity in this appellation; she sees in a far-off vista her daughter's children; a daughter seems more a part of herself than her son does; a mother lives over her life again in her daughter; a daughter's triumphs are hers; her daughter's lover seems to be hers also. And how she watches her daughter's steps to show her the pitfalls and snares which she herself so well remembers, and, indeed, which never fade from her memory! And in later years, in the motherhood of her daughter, she is young again, forgets the lapse of years, and can less than ever realise to herself that she has grown old. A son is the pride of a mother's heart; a daughter is a part of her soul.

CHAPTER V.

THE BIRTH OF OTHER CHILDREN — CONTROL OVER THEM IN INFANCY — THEIR EARLY EDUCATION — THEIR DIET, MEDICINE—TRANSGRESSION—REPENTANCE.

YEARS rolled on. More children—boys and girls—were born to me, till I numbered eight. My husband's prospects brightened with each

addition to our household, but not sufficiently so that I could afford to entrust their education to expensive schools, and I have lived to be thankful that such was the case. Gifted with a useful education, I was well fitted to lay the foundation for a more elaborate superstructure. Above all things, I first taught my children obedience. However much I lacked judgment and experience in managing the ailments of my children, here I was at home. I had been taught to obey, and I became convinced, from what I saw in other families, that children could, as they were trained to good or left to run wild, make or mar the happiness of every home. Dot was docile from sheer inability to be otherwise; my little Edith, from natural sweetness of temper; but there were six others with every shade of temperament to control or to guide—three girls, and three boys—beside Dot and Edith.

Soon after the birth of the latter I could afford two servants, one in the nursery and one in the kitchen; but do not for one moment imagine that my active exertions were at all lessened by this apparent help—far from it. If I requested anything to be done, I had always to see that it was so. My little ones learned early to obey; even a babe of three months, when I held up my finger and put on a grave look, knew that such was the language of reproof, though I spoke not. I early accustomed my infants to go to strangers, and thus relieved myself of a great deal of trouble; not that signs of rebellion did not sometimes appear, but I never allowed a child to become master. This obedience was not of spontaneous growth, but the result of constant though gentle drilling, if it may be so called. If a child wanted anything not within its reach, and cried if it was not given immediately, it certainly never got it then, and was made to understand this. Consequently, it soon became wise enough to know crying was useless. This was great trouble at first, but I had been so trained, and had seen the good effects on a large family of brothers and sisters, and therefore I was firm—too much so, my husband often told me.

At first our means were so limited that our house was necessarily small; yet there we remained till my sixth child was two years old. But, however, small as it was, one room I spared to make a nursery. Consequently, we had but one sitting-room, and that open to all visitors who chose to call on us. Occasionally we found this had its inconveniences, though nothing to what it would have been if the children had been rambling over the house, from attic to kitchen. The room was only a back parlour, but it opened on to the strip of garden at the back. From its situation there were no "poundings" overhead, and no sliding down balusters at the risk of broken heads or necks. The garden was their own, and divided into little patches; one patch being appropriated to each of the children, excepting baby, to whom was conceded the right to meddle with each, as became the reigning power in the house.

Two things I was specially firm in—order and neatness. "A place for everything, and everything in its place," was conspicuously written up in the nursery. There was a low cupboard, with shelves for books, and another for toys, of which there were plenty of all kinds. I never thought money badly spent in inexpensive toys.

I remembered my own delight in them, and also in story-books—not sensible ones I must confess, but “Bluebeard,” “Jack and the Bean Stalk,” “The House that Jack Built,” and others of the same kind, not resplendent with pictures in gold and colours, but some rough woodcuts, that seemed sufficient to convey the meaning of the story, which in more than one instance led to attempts at copying, thus early developing the imitative faculty.

Outside in the passage were pegs for hanging up cloaks and hats—each peg with its owner's name; and in the garden was a shed, where all the gardening tools were deposited. I do not mean to say anything like continuous order or neatness was kept, or that constant reproof went on in consequence of shortcomings; but good habits were given, if they were not always followed. I frequently put away the litter myself, saying kindly—

“Mamma likes to see the room tidy; let us all help to make it so.” Then the little feet pattered about, and the little hands were ready to be useful; then a kiss was given to each, and such a joyful clapping and shout at the end of our labour.

Then mamma must sing a song, or tell a tale, or play at company, or do anything else that the little elves asked by way of amusing them. And here was the great and powerful charm I held over my children. In the play hours I became one of themselves, so that their play did not often become a romp—though this I seldom objected to, provided it was not too rough. And from the youngest to the oldest I endeavoured to make each independent of help. What they asked the servants to do for them beyond the necessary routine of bathing and dressing them was asked as a favour, not as a service demanded. Also each child was made to assist the other as much as possible, and with loving words and kindness.

It was somewhat a difficult matter, with a large and increasing family, to give them economical yet relishing food. I can at this moment recollect my horror, when a child, of boiled rice, boiled mutton, and mutton broth—a dislike originating in the manner of cooking; for instance, rice, which was invariably boiled to a paste when it came to table, and there sparingly mixed with sugar, nutmeg, and butter. As a child I observed that my nurse never ate any of the mixture which, with potatoes, and boiled mutton—so hard that one's teeth could not get through it—was invariably the nursery dinner three times a week. Then there was always a diet day, when no meat was allowed—only mutton broth. I can well recollect the greasy mess, from which I used to turn to bread and butter, and ate it with a relish, with the stewed fruit which always made part of the dinner. The very name of diet-bread now conjures up the whole scene of our diet day dinner.

Notwithstanding my own dislike to mutton and rice, I gave them to my children, but cooked in a very different manner; and we had a diet day, too, and a very good thing it is in a family to put aside animal food for one day out of seven, merely as a matter concerning health. I should mention that I very easily got my servants into the habit, though it was not compulsory upon them to do so. My husband dined out one day in each week, and this gave us opportunity.

I had three-quarters of a pound of rice washed in boiling water three times, and finally in cold water; this was to take off the earthy taste of the rice. Four quarts of milk, which would cost a shilling, were destined for our pudding. I had two deep pie-dishes—each would hold two quarts of milk, six ounces of the washed rice, and two ounces of moist sugar, with a *little* nutmeg, mixed all well together; then two quarts of milk, some tiny bits of butter on the top. I put it in a slow oven for four hours; and so we had two puddings of good size, sufficient for our dinner, for seventeenpence, and most delicious puddings they were, far preferable to any made with eggs, and infinitely more wholesome. I always contrived to have this diet day on a Monday. As to the mutton and mutton broth, on the Tuesday a large neck of mutton, weighing 8 pounds, with some portion of the fat taken off, was put into a long kettle of boiling water, then the kettle drawn back a little way off the fire that it might not boil too fast, and when it boiled, then stewed half an hour to each pound—that is, four hours—so that when the joint came to table it was thoroughly cooked. A little of the liquor, as free from fat as possible, was taken from the saucepan, thickened with a little flour, and some nicely-boiled and chopped parsley was mixed with it, and used with the meat, not poured over it. This, with a dish of potatoes, mashed smoothly, salted, and a little milk added, then browned in the oven, made a dinner which all were delighted to eat.

The water in which the mutton was boiled was carefully put by in a pan; the next morning the fat was removed from it. Then the liquor was put on to boil with the bones of the mutton, from which every particle of meat had been previously taken off, cut into square bits, and laid on one side. Into the liquor when it boiled was thrown three ounces of Scotch barley, previously well washed in hot water, also a little salt. This was simmered for three hours; then strained and the liquor boiled again, and then taking three or four turnips cut first into rounds scarcely half an inch thick, then laying each round one on the other, they were rapidly cut into dice shapes; two large onions were minced fine; these, with the turnip and the meat previously cut off, were thrown in and boiled a quarter of an hour, and then turned into a tureen, and, a dish of boiled potatoes served separately, made another excellent meal for us all.

Once a week invariably, and it was generally when we had cold meat minced, I gave the children a dinner which was always hailed with delight, and always looked forward to—this was a dish of boiled onions. The little things knew not they were taking the best of all medicines for expelling what most children are great sufferers from—worms. I believe mine were kept wholly free by this remedy alone. Not only boiled onions for dinner, but *chives* also they were encouraged to eat with their bread and butter, and for this purpose they had a tuft of chives in their little gardens. It was a medical man who taught me to boil onions as a specific for a cold in the chest. He did not know at the time, till I told him, that they were good for anything else. His way of boiling onions I give for universal benefit, and to those who like them they certainly form in this way a pleasant medicine, and one of the most nutritious and digestive of vegetables.

Peel as many large onions as may be needed, or reckon three for each

perum; have ready a very large saucepan of boiling water, and into it throw a lump of salt the size of a large onion; throw the onions into the boiling water, taking care there is plenty of it, and that it does not stop boiling; cover the onions close and let them boil for one hour—no longer. Then, the instant they are wanted, drain them carefully from the water, place them on a hot inverted sancer or drainer in a vegetable dish, cover closely, and send them to table to be eaten with cold uncooked butter, salt, and pepper. They must be served the instant they are drained, or they will turn black. If the onions are properly boiled according to the recipe, they will be perfectly white and soft as marrow; there will be no waste of outer or inner skins, for all parts of the onions will be alike. I would recommend a mother to cook them herself for the first time; she can then instruct her servant; but bearing in mind that there must be plenty of boiling water, and it must not stop boiling, or the onions will be tough and discoloured.

I ever found that these, eaten once or twice a week, also milk of sulphur and honey formed into an electuary or paste, as spring and autumn medicine, kept my little ones in health.

I varied the rice with tapioca, sago, and arrowroot puddings, but they were always made without eggs; and a boiled suet pudding, made with a pound of flour, a little salt, a half a pound of finely chopped suet, mixed with sufficient water only to make it into not too soft a mass, then put into a pudding-basin, and tied down, put into boiling water, and boiled four hours, made a delightful and wholesome change when cut into slices, upon each of which was put a spoonful of jam. It is the not boiling puddings long enough, as well as eating of them to excess, that renders them unwholesome. Baked pastry of any kind I never permitted. Roast meats they partook of, as well as fish, for a change; but never fish and meat both at one meal, and vegetables were not forbidden, for I consider them wholesome and easy of digestion if properly cooked, neither too much nor too little.

For drink, they generally had water; but in the summer the juice of three lemons, without pip or rind, a teaspoonful of cream of tartar, a quarter of a pound of white sugar, and a quart of boiling water poured on these ingredients, and left till cold, made not only a refreshing drink, but a very healthful one, when drank on two days of the week only.

Bread and butter one week formed their breakfast, with milk and water flavoured with tea; and the following they had bread and milk. I gave them no choice in the matter. For tea, milk and water only, and bread and butter, with watercresses, chives, and fruit, but not stone fruit—apples raw or roasted, but only one of these relishes of an evening; thus each came in its turn, and was eaten with appetite. There was no supper—nothing had after five o'clock. At seven the children went to bed; but first, before they were undressed and bathed, I prayed a short prayer with them, and heard them individually ask a blessing from God, who, they were told, would then keep and guard them from all danger through the night.

The morning always seemed to me to be ushered in by their merriment; at least their laughter generally announced the fact to us—who slept at no great distance from them—that another day had dawned. The

previous night I always had a slice of tolerably thick bread and butter cut for each child, which was covered over, and placed outside the bedroom door—the latter I never had closed—also a cup of milk and water, so that the little creatures' hunger was satisfied before they could get their breakfast, two hours later. Those who liked to play in the garden did so; but then there were two of my children, Dot and Edith, to whom the morning air seemed too fresh; and who could never bear cold water.

I would caution every mother against well-meant but injudicious attempts to harden the constitution. Many children die in the process. Little tender flowers—each requires a different treatment. The first time I tried a cold bath with Dot the poor darling turned so blue—his shivering "Oh! mamma!" went to my heart. I rapidly dried him, rolled him in flannel, and laid him down, when after a while he slept off his nervous exhaustion. The same thing occurred with my little Edith, while with the others the cold water and after-rubbing seemed but to exhilarate their spirits, till they became almost boisterous. I never tried the experiment again with my two tender plants, who were altogether differently organised from the rest, both physically and mentally. They after this always had a warm bath before going to rest.

One day I was startled by a shrill scream from the garden, and, looking round, missed little Mary. In a moment I had gone to the rescue.

"Oh! mamma, de naughty bee did sting me."

"Never mind, darling. Mamma will soon cure it."

I ran in for the oil bottle, which always hung in a convenient place ready for use. The moment I dropped the oil on the wound the child ceased crying; the puncture instantly rose in a white spot, but no pain was left. It was a wasp which had stung her, not a bee, for the latter nearly always leaves its sting behind. However, no more pain was experienced, and I would observe that I have never known the remedy to fail—simple sweet oil, and nothing more. This rapid cure made me appear very wonderful in the eyes of my children, for I afterwards overheard a conversation between them relating to my wisdom.

"Mamma knows everything," said Alice. "She knows when I am going to tell a story, and I shall never tell her another."

"How can mamma know everything?" asked sturdy Dick. "She can't tell what I am doing now."

"Mamma does know everything that we do," said Dot, "for she asks God, and He tells her."

Unseen, I took a view of Master Richard's employment; he was deliberately notching the garden seat with a knife taken from the kitchen. Soon after I came downstairs into the children's room, where they were all assembled. I had some fruit to divide between them. All were served but Richard, who seemed instinctively to feel that something unpleasant was about to happen to him.

"Come here, my child," said I, as I placed the empty plate on the table. "Do you think you deserve any fruit?" I asked, as he came to me very pale, and every muscle of his face ready to relax with the tears which were filling his eyes. "I do not think you have obeyed papa,

who told you never to cut the garden seat. Do you not remember that he took away the knife nurse gave you, because you used it mischievously? Yet you have taken one out of the kitchen, and you have injured the arm of the seat. Now I cannot reward you for this conduct, and I am very sorry to have to punish you."

"But, mamma, how did you know it?" he sobbingly asked, his spirit of curiosity getting the better of his vexation and disgrace.

"That, my boy, I shall not tell you. Neither of your brothers or sisters, as you well know, could have told me; but yet I know it, and be sure that God also sees, hears, and knows of every act, whether good or bad. Now tell me, do you think that He looks down on such an act of disobedience with pleasure? And do you suppose that you are walking in His steps, so as to receive His blessing, when you are dishonouring your parents?"

"But it was only cutting the chair, mamma."

"Only committing an act of disobedience, Richard. When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden He told them not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. Do you not recollect this?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Then do you not see that it was neither the act of eating the fruit by our first parents, nor the act of cutting the chair by you, which makes the sin, and you a fit subject for punishment? But it is the act of disobedience, which is sin; and during your lifetime, my darling child, if you disobey God's command you will find that some punishment will surely follow."

Here the little fellow slipped his hand in mine, and laid his face in my lap, sobbing, while all the rest looked on, awe-stricken.

"I will never do so any more, mamma. Do, mamma, forgive me," he sobbed.

"I do forgive you, my boy, but you have sinned against God, broken one of His commandments."

Here the little culprit suddenly looked up inquiringly, as I went on—"Are you not enjoined in the fifth commandment to honour your father and mother?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, this means that you best honour them when you obey their lawful commands; and when you disobey them you break one of the commandments; and, my child, a very little sin unrepented of frequently leads to those crimes for which men are punished, even in this world, by being put into prison; and sometimes, even, they are put to death. I forgive you, my boy," and here I kissed him, "but there is One you must ask forgiveness of besides myself. Come with me into my room, and let us pray that God will pardon my Richard's disobedience."

And so saying, we went upstairs, where in the quietness of my bedroom, the little fellow kneeled down by my side, put up his little hands, and with quivering lips asked—

"What must I say, mamma?"

"Repeat after me: O Lord, I pray to be forgiven for my disobedience to my parents, for the Saviour's sake, who, while on earth, took up little

children in His arms and blessed them." I rested my lips for a moment on his upturned forehead, and said softly, "Amen." He sprang on my lap, and put his arms around my neck, saying—

"Mamma, may I go to bed? I don't want to play any more; and you will undress me—please, mamma, do."

I readily acquiesced in this request, for I thought the effect of the conversation and subsequent prayer would not so readily pass away.

I early taught my children to reverence the Holy Name, as well as assiduously endeavoured to represent Him as especially a God of love—One never to be feared, excepting when sin had been committed. Children understand love very readily; hence their faith. They are quick "discerners of spirits," and even an infant's eye will assume a grave questioning look at a stranger, till assured of the spirit within—by what mental process is not to be known—and then the quick respiration and joyful crow announce that it is satisfied.

I studied to make them understand that the influence of God surrounded them—that He was, indeed, a very present help in time of trouble, and to verify these teachings I read from the Bible such passages as bore reference to our frequent conversations upon the subject; and they were taught, young as they were, the benefits of prayer—prayers neither long nor ceremonious, but suited to the exigency of the moment, for living in life without prayer is very like endeavouring to steer a vessel without a rudder.

CHAPTER VI

EARLY EDUCATION—HISTORY—GEOGRAPHY—GRAMMAR—SPELLING—
DRAWING—DOT BECOMES AN ARTIST—GIRLS AT SCHOOL—MUSIC
LESSONS.

TILL Dot had attained his eleventh year I was the only instructor my children had. It was, I must confess, an irregular education which they acquired, but it had its use. The multiplication table was learned by heart before they could read—learned as a pastime and a game; so were the pence and shilling tables. Even the babe, who could not tell a letter, would say "tice too fo," for twice two are four. I had a powerful recollection of my early studies, and of the time it took to get over the weary work. In this manner the children seemed to learn by intuition both hymns and tables. An hour in the morning was all the confinement to "school" which they had, and the same time in the afternoon, though this latter was rather devoted to my reading pretty stories and telling them tales of history; and the delight of the little ones, as they asked if it was "all too?" was unbounded. I was astonished in after-life to find how much of what are termed historical facts they had acquired. In the summer afternoons, when it was too hot for other pastime, as we sat in the cool shade, it was delightful to watch

the upturned faces, with the wistful eyes and the wrapt attention, greedily absorbing all the chief points of historical interest in which the child or children of the time had any share. They never wearied of the story of Alfred, of Arthur, of Margaret of Anjou and her little son in the New Forest, and of the two murdered princes. Years after, when Dot was grown strong, and could move about like the others, I was paying a visit in the neighbourhood of Beaulieu Abbey, where Margaret had once sheltered, and on visiting the place, soon after our entrance, Dot was missing. Presently he came back. "Oh! mamma, it is quite a new room where Margaret and her son Edward found refuge. I am so disappointed." I merely mention this to show how vividly incidents, whether of narration or otherwise, are painted on a child's brain.

Geography I taught my children almost wholly in conversations. Three large maps—one of the world, another of Europe, and the third of England and Wales—graced the walls of the play-room, and this indeed was our schoolroom. I bought a geographical puzzle, the "Tour of Europe;" and as I could not purchase one, I made a puzzle on the same plan that answered every purpose of a summer's ramble in England; this was afterwards extended to Scotland and Ireland. I managed this from guide-books, gazeteers, and other sources, and by it got on wonderfully well. We made imaginary visits—first to our friends in the county we were living in, then to our relatives in the adjoining county, and where we had neither friends nor relatives I turned to a biography, selected some eminent character who had lived near our time, and we paid an imaginary visit to him or her, and so we visited all the places that had anything of interest by which they could be remembered.

It is very difficult for children to understand grammar. I can well recollect my own shortcomings in the matter. I had never heard of a "noun." Then how could I tell what a noun was? The answer, "A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing," failed to convey any meaning; and, arguing in my own mind that I had never heard a person called a noun, I thought the whole was nonsense. Nevertheless, whatever I thought, English grammar had to be learned; but for years it was a detestable book to me, and learning a lesson from it, and the subsequent examinations, appeared to me like walking barefoot over a rough and pebbly road. I studied long before I could arrange a satisfactory method for my children's attainment of this necessary part of education, nor did I attempt it till Dot had reached twelve years old—though he was more like a child of nine. The gentle Edith was taller and stronger, and with an extremely quick apprehension of most subjects. Dot always referred to her in everything.

One afternoon, when all were seated around me, I said—

"I have thought of a new game; who will be the first to learn it?"

There were many voices, and but one reply: each would be the first.

"What can it be, mamma?" asked Dot.

"It is the game of words," I replied. "Now, observe, I shall take ^{any} pieces of paper, on each of which I shall write a name;" and so I
article, noun, adjective, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, preposi-

tion, conjunction, and interjection, each name on a separate paper, and read them aloud. Of course these words conveyed no idea of their meaning, and I might just as well have read Greek. All the children looked very grave, waiting to hear what was coming next. Then I placed the papers in regular order. "These I shall call classes or divisions."

"Now then," said I, "every word which either of you can speak belongs to one or other of the classes or names on these papers. All the words contained in any book can be divided into no more than ten divisions. Suppose I write this sentence—'George said he was very happy.' Now I shall cut each word separate from the others. I must place *George* on the noun paper, *said* must go to the verb, *he* to the pronoun, *was* to the verb, *very* to the adverb, *happy* to the adjective; and all other words in this and every other book belong to one or other of the names on these papers; so that, you see, all the words we speak, or hear, or read can be divided into ten classes. Now see which of you can learn these ten names first." And then I repeated them slowly several times, then wrote them out on slips of paper, and gave to each that could read writing; and the three elder ones—Dot, Edith, and Alice—I gave in charge to teach the three younger ones; but the two youngest, in imitation of the elder children, would repeat also, though as yet but lispingly. The next day the lesson was perfectly repeated, but conveyed no sense to their young minds. I then explained to them how they might distinguish which of the ten divisions each word belonged to.

"Richard, there are a great many nouns in this room—many objects or things."

"Yes, mamma, there are chairs and tables, and books and stools."

"And boys and girls," said I, "who are all nouns, and belong to the second divisions of words. The boys and girls, because they are the names of persons; and chairs and tables and other objects, because they are the names of things."

No very clear perception of my meaning dawned upon them for a long time, and I found this task not the most pleasant, for it was very difficult to convey the meaning of every word, so that they might understand and retain what they heard.

I may as well say here a few words about my manner of teaching spelling. After the children had learned from their books to spell simple words correctly, they then spelled from dictation—that is, read a short sentence of five or six words, and each spelled a word in turn: this exercised the memory and sharpened the intellect. Each word of two or more syllables was divided into the proper syllables before spelling; thus a rapid and sure progress was obtained. Writing and spelling from dictation occupied two afternoons of the week, and these writing exercises served also for parsing lessons, which also taught them to think.

During all these years, though I became so devoted to my children, I never allowed them to interfere with my time when my husband came home. They were early made to understand that mamma then could not be with them; and I would suggest to every woman never to allow

her children to usurp the time and loving attention due to the husband. If she does, home will be no home to him ; he will become irritable and seek comfort elsewhere. Women have too often themselves to blame for cold and indifferent husbands. Every evening I was always ready to sit down in pleasant chat with Arthur, or go out for an evening stroll, or make a quiet call—for regular visiting is out of the question for a mother of a family, unless she chooses to delegate to other hands the culture of her children's minds. Yet thousands do this, and reap in after-life bitterness and sorrow. Not that well-born, well-bred, and fully competent teachers do not exist, but they have not the power in themselves to impart instruction in the same manner a mother can. Too often rebellion and temper in her pupils—for which there is no adequate authority given to the governess to punish—bar the way, and far too often the young teacher herself is treated with disrespect by the unthinking parents. It is of no use recapitulating evils which are so well known, but which no amount of writing will alter. The example of those mothers in their households, who may be termed the ruling powers for good or evil in their class, will do much to eradicate the snobbishness of maltreating by open insult or contempt the lady whom they have chosen to impart knowledge to their children.

For Edith, Alice, and Mary, as they grew up, I was fortunate enough to find a good school, and not an expensive one. It was conducted by gentlewomen of good birth, true Christian women, who endeavoured to make every human acquirement subservient to the humility and meekness of spirit characteristic of Christ's true flock. The girls did not leave their home till the youngest was twelve years old. I dreaded their contact with the rude ungovernable natures I so well remembered in my school days, but my husband deemed a school necessary, and I submitted, knowing that it must be if he had so decided.

While they were at home, and yet very young, I found it necessary to have an instructress in music for them. They all, including the boys, commenced to learn as each attained the age of five years, while their little fingers were flexible. I must say that both to the children and myself the note learning was an inexpressible weariness. I engaged Miss Barton to come every day to superintend the practice. Nor were they allowed to practise without she was present. I interdicted all tunes : the practice was really work. The scales in all their various keys and in all combinations formed the work, with short pieces from old masters, with more of harmony than tune in them. But I must except sacred music. No evening passed over without some strain ascending in all praise to the Creator. Every night was a Sabbath—a rest—the tired spirit seemed to ascend nearer heaven as the melodies rose on the stillness of the room. I need scarcely remark that all my children became musicians, with more or less skill, according as their tastes varied. But the girls when they went to school knew only their scales* and but little else besides sacred pieces.

* It is related of the celebrated master Porporini that having a pupil of high musical genius and most flexible voice, he taught him for seven years only the scales, at the end of which time the youth becoming dissatisfied, "Go," said Porporini, "you are the finest singer in the world," and so it is said he proved.

I was not much surprised to hear in one of their letters home that they were at the top of the class in which they were placed, and were about to enter the first division among elder girls, and that they were at the time of writing at the top of the Bible class.

I ought to have before alluded to my children's taste for drawing. Dot and Edith were the artists of the family, and the remaining three cared neither one way nor the other for the art, which to me had always been productive of much gratification. My way of teaching them was perhaps peculiar, though at first, and at no regular intervals, by way of pastime I challenged them as to which could draw the straightest and longest line, then the curve, then two sides of a triangle, then the triangle, the square, the round, and the oval. They were not at all aware there was any design in this, not the slightest suspicion that it was a task, or else, I fear, I should not have got on so well. Of course I joined them in the pastime, and my lines and curves, &c., were purposely as indifferent in perfection as theirs, though I was the first to improve. "Let us make 'curbs,' was often the cry when tired with other things; and I am certain they found it equally amusing with making "dirt pies," or other extraordinary resources which children discover. More than a year passed before any use was suggested of these lines and curves, which by this time could be made tolerably, but not uniformly, correct. One day, as I was sitting in rather an abstracted mood, my eye fell upon a small bottle containing gum, but which originally had held pomade. The shape of this bottle seemed to stand out distinctly before my eyes in its curves and lines.

"Look here!" I exclaimed; "here is a bottle made up of curves and lines. There are two straight lines down the sides; a half-circle at the bottom; near the top is more than a half-circle, and the top, you see, is a circle."

"No, mamma," said Dot, "not a circle; it is almost an oval."

"Not so; it is a circle, though it looks like an oval," I replied, showing them the top of the bottle, as I held it in my hand.

"So it is; but what makes it look like an oval?"

"The position, and the distance from which you view it," said I; "and this is called 'perspective,' and if you knew how to draw, you would sketch the object as it *appears* to your eyes, not as it actually is formed."

Dot pondered over the information I gave him, but did not quite comprehend it till Edith said—

"Look at yonder wall; that is what mamma means. Don't you see that at the far end it looks pointed, and here close by it is very wide; but I am sure it is the same width all the way down. Am I right, mamma?"

"Yes. It is the distance which creates the illusion. Even the farthest end of the room looks narrower than this where we are sitting."

Richard could not be brought to see this at first, nor, indeed, till I showed him a willow-pattern plate, where the trees and houses appeared up in the sky, simply because the size of the objects had not been reduced in accordance with their respective distances. Then, as if he had solved a riddle, the difficulty vanished.

Sketching soon became a very pleasant pastime, and Dot, or John, as we now frequently called him, gave unmistakable signs that his would be an artist's career, and being averse to any business or other profession, we reluctantly placed him for a year with a painter of well-deserved fame, but not until we had left him for a fortnight on a visit to the then president of the Royal Academy, to whom we were first known from letters of high introduction. At the expiration of this time he said—

"You will never make anything of the lad but an artist. Indeed, he is that now. But take him to S. Here is the address and a note. You cannot place him under better care."

Accordingly arrangements were made for his instruction in the art he loved so well. Two months after this myself and husband, passing near the British Museum—on our way to see our boy, whom I missed so much—we entered, and after some time drew near a student who was intent on copying a figure of Hercules, and did not observe the youth till we were turning away. "Dot!" I exclaimed. But it was a second before the soul which had gone out of him in loving admiration of his model returned to his eyes, and then in instant recognition he held out both his hands.

"Mother!" said he, and the tears welled into his eyes, though on the verge of manhood.

"And how do you get on, my boy?" his father asked, while I remarked, "How pale you look, my child!" But he heeded me not, intent upon replying to his father's question.

"Capital. I am studying anatomy."

"Why, what on earth will that do for you? You are not going to be a doctor."

"Mr. S. says that I shall never be able to properly sketch my figures if I don't study it."

"Well, there's something in that."

"Yes; he says he does not want me to be a copyist, but a true painter, and that I drew sufficiently well from models when I came to him. He tried me a day or two with lumps of chalk, and anything rough that came to hand; then he gave me an egg to copy, at which I laughed.

"My mother let us play at sketch-eggs when we were very young," said I. So he asked me to tell him all about it, and he was greatly amused at our play of curves and lines. He said it was so good a plan that he should like to see that system of amusement adopted in every house where children were. Then he asked me if I knew anything about mixing colours. Well, I didn't quite understand him, and so he said—

"I mean what two colours will make a green, or a violet, or a scarlet, or grey?"

"Oh, yes," I answered. "We had two or three paint boxes, but mamma always took from us every colour but five—yellow, red, blue, black, and white, and from these five, you know, we made every tint we needed, excepting when my sisters wanted to paint roses she gave them a piece of scarlet lake." I never told you yet, mother, how astonished I was when I first saw you produce a green from the blue and

yellow paint. And don't you recollect that beautiful poppy which Edith drew, and was at a loss for a colour, when you said, 'Mix the yellow and red together'—don't you remember how she danced about for joy? I have heard that Benjamin West's mother made him a painter, and I am sure you have made me one."

I smiled at the boy's enthusiasm, which it was hard to repress, though I longed to do so, for I saw the consuming fire within his eyes, that I feared would lure him from every other object in life than the profession which he had chosen.

His father said, "You must make the best of your time, my boy, for the year you are with Mr. S. I shall not be able to afford an increased expense consequent upon a longer period."

"Never fear for me, father. I can live upon a crust, so that I may become a painter." And the boy's cheeks flushed and his eyes sparkled, and as I looked upon his bright face a chill as of the grave came over me, though the sun was shining hotly upon us.

"Don't study too much, Dot. You are not strong," I said.

"Ah! mother mine," he gaily answered, "I don't know what study means. I'm not like Dick and the others. I have been to no school but yours, and where we only played at study. I told Mr. S. so once, and he said he wished all boys were taught like me. You know he has two sons, but they are so rough, and I don't think they care anything for their home; it is so 'slow' they said the other night."

The interview with Mr. S. was a very satisfactory one. He was pleased with the earnest spirit with which the boy took up his work. "Indeed, I have to repress his eagerness very often, and am astonished at his quickness of perception. The fact is, the lad has been taught to think, and to find a reason and motive for every action. I do not know whether this faculty is inherent in him, or whether it has come by early training. I should think the latter. He will make a pupil of whom I shall indeed be proud."

This was cordial balm to a mother's heart, but I "rejoiced with trembling;" a prophetic warning of the end seemed to be ever ringing in my ears, yet I lacked power to oppose, for what could I say?—everything looked bathed in sunlight; the shadow was as yet invisible; yet I could say with truth that there it was. My husband thought me a little silly when I mentioned my fears that Dot would overtask his strength, and that his enthusiastic spirit would cut through the slender sheath.

"Nonsense, Mary. I thought you had overcome all this nonsense in Dot's milksop days. I am glad to see such a manly bearing in him. He seems in so short a time to have sprung from a child to manhood."

"God keep him," I mentally prayed, and my prayer was answered, though not as I, in my fond mother's love, had hoped. But I am anticipating. Before we left him it was arranged that in the Christmas following he should return home for a month. It was now the early part of June, and with many pleasant words and happy thoughts we parted, and returned in time for the commencement of the holidays, when Dick and his sisters rejoined us at home.

The girls were grown all that parents' hearts could wish. I looked closely and with misgivings for any blemish in mind or manner, for any lapse in their simple faith, but I detected nothing.

"It has been no trouble to us to learn, mamma," Edith said one morning, "and of course at school we have had a regular routine of study and reading, but you so early taught us to think that it has been all pleasure to us. The music master was quite dismayed when we told him we could not play pieces.

"It is extraordinary," said he. 'I understand from Mrs. Forbes that your parents desire you to excel in the art, which should always be commenced at a very early age.'

"And you should have seen him, mamma, with what a contemptuous air he said—

"Have the goodness to show me how you play.'

"Mary and Alice stood looking on each other with dismay, while I produced those six sonatas that you said you had learned.

"I thought you said that you did not play pieces.'

"Not show pieces,' I said.

"I played them through, and then he asked me to play the scales set in the different keys. He looked at me with astonishment.

"And your sisters?" he asked.

"Oh, they play in the same way.'

"Then, young ladies, I ask pardon. Scarcely any theme will be difficult to you. You seem quite to understand the composer's marks of expression, and you follow them. Any further difficulties you will readily surmount. Only practise steadily. May I ask who taught you to play with such emphasis—such feeling?"

"Mamma told us that every piece of music was a poem either in blank verse or rhyme; that the marks of expression were indicative of the composer's meaning; and that if we did not at first quite understand it, upon a few times carefully playing it the meaning would be revealed; so whatever we have to play we like to read it over well first without the piano.'

"But you must have practised much?" he asked.

"Only an hour a day each of us. But then Miss Barton, our governess, always superintended us, and we were never permitted to slur over a note wrongly played.'

"But," said he, 'this new piece which I have given you, can you read it quickly?'

"Oh, yes," I answered, and I began to read the notes aloud without the piano, at which he was much amused, and said it was a capital way, and he should adopt it in teaching. Do you know, mamma, that was the first time I really felt grateful to you? for in my secret heart I used to think you were very fussy, and I did always so wish to go to school."

CHAPTER VII.

BIBLE TEACHING—THE ARTIST'S SUCCESS—A DREAM OF THE FUTURE
—ILLNESS—DEATH—REBELLION—A SECOND DEATH—SUBMISSION.

WHILE the girls were at home we had our customary verses of the Bible, two or three, but not more, read every morning after breakfast, and the usual comments made upon the meaning that lay hidden or developed in the sacred words, a custom which I found far more conducive to profit than reading a whole chapter as a matter of duty, while the thoughts were perhaps wandering far away. Therefore, one verse rightly understood was better than a weary hour spent in reading without reflection. After this pleasant occupation was over Mary looked up, with the light of some amusing thought, and met my inquiring look.

"Do you know, mamma, one day there was a Bible class examined?—that is, so many girls were given a number of questions to study on a Tuesday, and on the following Saturday morning they were expected to have the answers ready. Alice came into the room, joined the class, and answered with the rest, and so well that she was to have a good mark. But when they came to put it against her name it was not down on the class board. Alice looked quite frightened, and was ready to cry, and when asked why she had chosen to join the class without being told to do so, and that she was neglecting her French, she was going away without saying a word, but I replied, 'Alice did not lose her time in studying these Bible questions, ma'am, for mamma taught us all she has been asked.' Mrs. Forbes said she was rejoiced to hear it; she wished there were more Christian mothers in the land; and then, dear darling mamma, I felt so proud of you, and I then understood the meaning of the phrase in Proverbs, 'Her children arise up and call her blessed.'"

My heart fairly rose in overflowing gratitude to God, as I listened to Mary's words. I had never wearied my children with long prayers or long Scripture readings or sermons. The two or three verses sufficed for a pleasant discourse which could be easily remembered and fitted to daily application. Sometimes I read out one of the Bible histories; the place where the event happened was traced, if possible, on the map of ancient Palestine, and thus life and interest in the subject were given; and more than even gratifying my children, I found my own account in preparing the employment of the hour for them. It is astonishing how differently I understood the meaning of much that I now read from what I did in my young days, and how clear the sense was made to me. This can well be imagined if one reflects that in childhood, or even girlhood, how seldom troubles appear; and in sunny days, who dreams of danger? who sees the necessity of providing against a tempest? It is only when helpless, beaten, and drifted we lay hold of the strong, and are grateful, and that which we once passed by unheeded becomes in its need the only one thing we desire. With rare exceptions we never

truly seek God till trouble comes. We pray to and we read of Him, but we lay no hold of Him in faith as the One Healer of all our griefs.

Not one of my children ever felt Bible-reading to be a weariness, because they were never allowed to read it as they pleased. I taught them that though it contained all information that was needed for our guidance in this life and for our happiness hereafter, still it was never to be approached in a careless irreverent manner, or to be taken up at any moment, and thus I led them to prefer always reading it with me; and, although it was always ready at hand, and the opening it and reading it by themselves was not actually forbidden, it came to be understood that mamma liked best to read, to comment upon, and explain it to them, and that without her it was in some sense a forbidden book, or rather, something set apart as sacred; and from this very circumstance alone, so contradictory is the nature of all human beings that a knowledge of its contents was the one thing earnestly desired.

My sturdy Dick seemed even more interested in Bible-reading than the others. His school life had not altered him. He was still a child apart from the rest. He took nothing for granted. He would tire one with inquiries why such a thing was. It could only be said of him that he hungered and thirsted for knowledge, but at every fresh accession of information he pondered and doubted how he could prove it.

Dot, or John, as it was proper to call him, though in my thoughts he was always "Dot," was in London, and frequently writing home hopefully. He was getting on, hoped to be with us at Christmas, was copying a painting of the Holy Family in the National Gallery, and it was to be a Christmas gift to his darling mother. The happy season soon came, and Christmas eve arrived, but no John. It was not the days of railroads then, and the coach which was due at seven had not reached our quiet town at ten. For we had long left London and been settled in the country, where my husband was the manager of a country bank.

How well do I remember that evening! The dining-room was bright with the glare of a ruddy fire, on which a log of wood had been placed, and occasionally it lighted up with a flash of radiance so cheering and so grateful in its warmth, for there had been a heavy fall of snow for two days. The table was set out with all the delicacies which Christmas brings, and in honour of our young artist's arrival a Christmas pudding was to be cut. The wainscoted walls gleamed with pictures, the ornaments scattered about flashed with scintillations of welcome, which shut out thoughts of evil. I was alone. The rest, with their father, all warmly wrapped up, had gone to see the cause of the unusual delay. Presently the trampling of feet was heard, the servants rushed to the door, and once more I heard my boy's voice, once more I clasped him in thankfulness.

We were soon seated round the table, and as merry as reunited hearts always are.

"Now for my present, Dot," said I the next morning after breakfast.

"Well, mamma," he replied, "I know I haven't done the right thing, but I've sold your present, and this is what I've got for it," displaying ten sovereigns.

"But how?" I asked in astonishment.

"It was a small water-colour copy of Correggio's Holy Family, that I thought you would be delighted with. When it was finished a gentleman, who had, I must say, been kind enough to watch my progress several times, looked over my shoulder and asked me what I was going to do with it. I told him it was for a Christmas present to you.

" 'Well, you can paint your mother another picture,' said he, 'and let me have that. I'll give you ten pounds for it.'

"I hesitated, and he laughed and said—

" 'Make up your mind, my boy, and tell old S——, the door-keeper. He knows where to find me.'

"I thought the matter over and over. I did so wish to bring it home; it had been to me like a pet. I had even got to love it, and kept touching and re-touching it, even after I concluded that it was finished. I should not have parted with it, but I thought that ten pounds was a large sum for so small a thing, and that my accepting the sum would be an earnest to you that I could even now get money, and be no longer an expense to my father. So I decided upon selling the picture, and this you see is the result."

"But who was the gentleman who bought it?" his father asked.

"Lord E——, of M—— Park. And wasn't it carefully packed, too, in a small wooden case lined with tin! Old S—— wouldn't tell me who was my grand patron for a long time, but I coaxed the old fellow at last. So now you've got the whole story, and you are not displeased, mamma?" said he, suddenly throwing his arms round my neck and kissing me.

Far from it. The tears were slowly rolling down my cheeks in thankfulness that so early my boy's talent had been appreciated. His father got up and looked out of the window. Matter-of-fact Dick asked—

"Dot, what are you going to do with all that money?"

"It isn't mine," his brother replied; "it is mamma's. I didn't bring her the picture, and she must buy something she will like with the money. What shall it be, mamma mine?" he asked, putting his arm round my waist.

"Oh, Dot, keep it," I said. "You will want it by-and-bye."

"Mother, I am not your boy if I do. I'll have none of it."

And with that he threw it into my lap. The money was carefully put away, and looked at, I will not say how many times, and the mother's pride rose up and swelled and inwardly chanted the mother's song of her boy. All the future was rose-tinted—a life of independence, of fame, casting its full radiance on all the family circle. The fairest flower which God ever gave was to bloom through life in one rich perfume, forgetting the Great Gardener who lends, not gives, and when he claims the loan says, "Not thine, but Mine." It is a sad story this, and were well brought to an end, for the recollection has unfitted me to carry on the thread of the tale in its slow unwinding.

A month saw my precious boy return to his duties, and at the end of the year he had so far improved, and showed so much genius, that he had left the house of Mr. S., with the consent of the latter, and, with our approval, had taken lodgings with a young friend, an architect.

Christmas came round once more, with all its joyousness, and with it

Dot arrived. In an instant my glance detected suffering. It was of no use putting it aside, endeavouring to conceal what was so visible. "I am overworked, that is all; it's only a little cold; now I'm home it will be all right." And so the sickness was pooh-poohed away. He certainly looked better when the end of February came, and with it his return to London, for I would not let him go before, and Dr. Vaughan had said there was no danger, only a little delicacy of constitution, which he would soon get over. Not many letters came from him after he left. "He was so busy—so engaged, was painting a picture that he hoped would get him the medal, and then he should be sent abroad to study the old masters. He should spend next Christmas with us, and then go to Rome."

"He cannot be ill," I argued, "if he writes so hopefully," and so I cheated myself with the belief that all was well. In November we were startled by a letter from his young friend, stating that he thought him not quite right, and, as he himself was coming into the country, had persuaded him to return also, instead of waiting for Christmas; that, as John's competition picture was finished, there was no longer any motive for remaining, and that they would be back almost as soon as the letter reached us. Arthur thought all this was true; but a loving mother has a prophetic spirit. I went so far the other way as to fancy I should receive him all but a corpse.

I watched and waited in restless anxiety; then wandered from one room to another, and, as is often the case, missed that which I most sought for. I did not hear the travellers arrive, and was coming downstairs as Edith was seeking me, exclaiming, "Mamma, John's come!" In an instant I knew how it was. Had my boy been well he would have sought me, not his sister. I entered the room; there he lay on the sofa, wan and thin, but held out both his hands. It was some moments before I could recover myself, for I had nearly fainted as I kneeled by the couch, and clasped him in my arms. It was Dr. Vaughan's voice that first recalled my deadened senses. Our thoughtful young friend had called at the doctor's as they drove along: hence his quick arrival.

"Now, now, this is nonsense. The boy is only tired. Cheer up, Dot! What is the matter? You'll be all right by-and-bye; only working a little too fast, eh?"

"That is all, doctor," he said cheerfully, and slowly raised himself upright. "And if mamma will only get me one of my old draughts which I like so well, and let me talk a little to my father and you, I shall be all right."

"There, girls, you hear? That's an order from head-quarters. So bustle about, and get your brother's room comfortable, while mamma makes the egg draught of old. But you needn't hurry about it," said the doctor.

Bewildered and hesitatingly I quitted the room; the girls followed me. What exact conversation took place between the three I cannot describe, but the purport of it was this: That in the previous summer, while playing at cricket, he had been struck by a cricket ball; the blow had brought on a tumour, which was neglected, and the result was the sickness which had brought him home.

Many months he lay in this hopeless state. Consumption came on; but even then we were hard to be persuaded that death was near. Further advice was obtained, and never shall I forget the moment when the physician said, "Before this day six weeks he will not be here." I was stunned, for, notwithstanding his illness, the blow was sudden. I grasped for support blindly. Nowhere could I turn for comfort. My life—what was it? Alas! alas! I now see, but did not then, how all my so-called religion had shrivelled up like a green leaf at the first frost. O God! how difficult it was to lose my son! I had no resignation—no faith; my soul was in rebellion, and the spirit's turmoil stamped its unrest upon my features. John was the first to see it. "My own mamma, how changed you are!" were his first words when he saw me. "You must not grieve. I know all, but I am happy. Pray with me, dearest mamma," and his white thin hand twined itself in my curls. "My child, I cannot," I gasped, rather than said. The suffering boy raised himself on his elbow, and looked at me in astonishment. That look recalled me to myself. I shivered, and said, "O that this cup might pass from me!" He clasped my hand tightly, and the tears stole down his cheeks as he murmured—

"Not so, not so; it is best as it is." And then, as if to himself, he gently spoke, "I loved my art better than all things—better than even you, dear mamma," and again he pressed my hand. "There was no moderation in me. I need not have worked so hard. I have thrown my life away. A little more rest, a little more time for food, and this might not have been. Better now than later. O God, pardon and keep my soul in peace!"

With these words, sleep overpowered him, and he lay sweetly slumbering for hours. I dared not move, though I felt faint from my cramped position. My mind was busy wandering to the days of his childhood, to the many many times that I had watched and tended his sick bed, now to be the last. The thought was torture. I looked on his face, but the smile there was not human. Never before had I seen or could I have imagined anything half so lovely—a loveliness not of earth. "Surely his spirit is with the angels," I thought, "and dare I recall him by my grief?" Strange, I could not pray—did not even think of it. I turned with distaste and rebellion from all thoughts of casting my care upon God. Like Rachel of old, I refused to be comforted. During this unusual slumber Edith came and whispered, "Dear mamma, God sees it best." White as the palest of white roses, she knelt by my side. "Thy will be done, but give us strength to bear," she softly prayed. I looked at her, as if contemplating a piece of statuary. Even critically I examined her—even thought how fair and lovely she looked, and wondered she could so pray; and then I drew comparisons.

"It is not her child, only her brother. She cannot know a mother's heart."

The sun went down, and twilight deepened into night, and still the sufferer slept on. Late in the evening he awoke, refreshed. His first words were, "Kiss me, dear mamma. I have been in such a beautiful place—I have been so happy; but I am hungry."

How delighted I was to hear this common expression come from lips

devoted to the tomb. There was something so cheering in the words that hope was born again within me, and I trusted that the sickness would—must pass away—a miracle must be worked in my favour, and with the thought came back the desire for prayer. Alas! it was not that of submission, but of entreaty that my darling boy might yet be spared, and so night and day I wearied Heaven with senseless repetitions.

Time wore on, and the dreaded six weeks were passed, and even spring was come, and yet he lingered with us, daily growing weaker and weaker. One fine sunny morning in April—the apple trees were in full bloom; these he could see from his window—"I should like to be taken into the garden, if it could be done," he said. He was placed in a Bath chair, and so wheeled on the soft grass, and he felt better. As strength permitted he was thus taken as often as possible, until June came, and then the very early apples were ripe. On the morning before the last fatal one he was wheeled in the garden, as he had been many times before; the apple trees, laden with fruit, bent their branches to the ground. As he was slowly taken past he desired that a branch might be lifted to him. He admired them, smelt to them, and seemed as if caressingly to touch each with gentle love. After this he looked round on everything—trees and flowers—then asked to be taken in.

Night came, and before the morning dawned his gentle spirit left us. And thus, in the bloom of life, with everything around him to make life desirable, died my cherished darling son.

The hours of the weary day that succeeded, the footfalls which were hushed, and the scarcely audible voices, which sounded as if there was a fear to awaken the dead, the preparations which even in the first hour after the spirit's flight were necessary to be attended to, the despair at the thought that the services which had been so long necessary were now of no avail—all this was overpowering to feel, and, after long years, it is even now depressing to recall.

Later in the day, and before our loss had become known, we were startled by the sound of carriage wheels, and the loud ringing of the door-bell. A gentleman, who looked as surprised as ourselves, for the influence of the stillness had made itself felt just as it does on a Sabbath day, inquired of the servant, could he "see Mr. John Norton?"

"Master John is dead, sir."

"Dead! What do you mean?"

"He died this morning before daylight, sir."

"O God! And for this I have come! Can I see any of the family?"

The stranger was speedily introduced to us, but we knew him not.

"No, no, you do not," he replied when we said so; "but I know every one of you. My name is B——."

"Ah!" my husband exclaimed. "We know you now. A thousand times welcome for his sake."

As Mr. B—— paced up and down he said—

"How my sons have anticipated with joyous feelings this visit of mine! John doubtless told you that we are all artists, one in one way,

one in another. I, you know, am an architect, or rather was. I stayed last night at the bishop's. We are old friends. It was he who introduced—ahem—you know—to the President of the Academy. Well, never mind, let me see the boy once more ;” and, opening the dining-room door, he at once proceeded upstairs, Arthur leading the way, and I following. I do not now recollect anything how we got to the room, or who went in first, but as I entered I saw Mr. B— on his knees at the side of the bed, his face buried in his hands. In a moment or two he got up, gazed upon the dead form, laid his hand upon the chest, and pressed his lips to the cold forehead. He then turned suddenly round, grasped both mine and my husband's hands, said, “God bless and comfort you !” and in a moment, without another word, he was gone. We never saw him afterwards ; but on turning to cover up the face we loved so well, on the breast was laid the coveted medal obtained by his picture, and a note from one of his young companions, telling him to “be jolly, for now he would have to go abroad, and be the envy of them all.”

How different was the realisation of all our hopes ! How the tone in which the note was written jarred us ! Arthur folded me in his arms, and together we wept over all that remained of our first-born. Did I live a thousand years, never should I forget that first real sorrow. More than once since has my heart been lacerated by the fading away of all I held dear, but when Dot died the tendrils of affection were rudely torn, so they never clasped so tightly again. It is useless to prolong any further detail, it benefits no one, and even now my more perfect submission to God's will cannot wholly repress that first sorrow, which seems ever fresh, because it was a first experience.

During her brother's illness Edith was his devoted attendant, and when he died she seemed to feel his loss far less than any of us. She spoke of him as if he were only gone a short journey, and when no tears were in her eyes we got accustomed to see a spasm flit across her face as though she were in pain, but this she always denied. Two months after his death we saw such a decided change in her that Dr. Vaughan was again called. He sat with her some time, and then told us that a change was necessary for her, and recommended Torquay. She shook her head, but acquiesced gently, as her wont now was in everything. Mary was detained from school to accompany Edith and myself, for not for a moment would I leave my drooping child. However, not to lengthen out the story of my second bereavement, Edith followed her brother in less than ten months. Consumption craved its victim, and she was the sacrifice. The loss of Dot stunned us ; this grief sent us prostrate. I seemed to see a fearful future before me—my husband and all my children gone, and “I alone left to tell the tale.”

There was a very large amount of rebellion in my heart at the loss of Dot. “Thy will be done,” though uttered a hundred times by my mouth, was never once said in my heart ; but when Edith was stricken down rebellion vanished, and a humbleness arose, as in deprecation ; but it required years of teaching to feel that what He had done must have been in love, not in anger.

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD'S CHOICE OF A BUSINESS—HIS ADVERTISING—ITS RESULTS
—HIS EXPERIENCE IN LONDON.

A LITTLE before Edith's death Richard had finally left school. As soon as the effort could be made after our bereavement his destiny was a matter for consideration. Over and over again we questioned him as to his choice of profession or trade, but could elicit no satisfactory reply. He came to me one morning, looking very grave, took a chair, and, leaning on the back of it, stood fronting me.

"Mother, I'm come to talk to you about what I'm to do. Father is too quick for me. I'm unhappy to be at home doing nothing. Pottering about like this will kill one. If it were not a question of money to be paid down with me I should say let me try my luck in the first thing which comes to hand, and I think now it would be for the best. I can't tell what I shall like. Suppose you and father give me a twelvemonth to try what I can do. I suppose a strong fellow can get his grub for his services."

"And what to do?" I laughingly asked. There was sound sense in the boy's words.

"Well, I'm not going to be a carpenter or a blacksmith, nor a butcher, nor a grocer, and least of all would I be a draper."

"An engineer?" I asked, "or a doctor, or a lawyer?"

"I can't tell. I think I fancy—but mind, I do not say for certain—but I have a half love for chemistry. I don't mean to kick about in a chemist's shop, and sell all the halfpenny articles which they do, but a good hard-working chemist who doesn't sell. I mean one who finds out all about things—"

"In general," I suggested.

An angry flush mounted to his brow, which, however, I would not notice. He did not go on, and I waited a few moments before I spoke, considering that if he turned his talent for inquiry into this channel, the everlasting "why?" of his would in a measure be answered; and if he did not find therein a rest, at all events chemistry, in its wonderful affinities, combinations, and creations, would be a source of perhaps profitable employment. All this took but a moment to flash through my brain, and an exultation arose in my heart at the thought of what might possibly be, and then the memory of my aspirations about Dot recurred to me, and I was humbled.

"Well, Dick, I will speak to your father about it. You know his heart is set upon your entering Mr. James's office, with a view, some time or other, to your being a partner there. Think the matter over again, and come here to me to-morrow morning. I do not wish that either you or I should be precipitate in speaking to your father. Be sure of yourself, my boy, first." And so, with a kiss, I dismissed him.

The morrow came, and so also came Dick, at the earliest possible moment after his father's departure.

"I will be a chemist, mother," said he, even before he had given me his morning greeting. "And more, I will be a chemist's boy—that is, a working boy. I mean to begin from the beginning, and I only want help till I can get on. I am sure in a twelvemonth to be able to do for myself."

I saw in a moment there was no other path open for him, and I promised to do all I could, at the same time begging him to wait patiently till some one could be found willing to take him.

"Ah, I knew that was just what you would say, but I can't wait for chances to turn up in my favour. I must make them. I haven't slept a wink all night, and I've drawn up an advertisement to put in the *Times*, to try my fortune in that lucky-bag."

I was astonished at the common sense of the boy, and amused at his not inappropriate designation of the fifth power of the realm. He held the projected advertisement out to me.

"No, no; read it, Dick—you will give it proper emphasis."

"No fun, mother. I'm in earnest. Here goes:—

A young gentleman is desirous of entering a chemist's laboratory, in order to become an adept in the mysteries of the sublime art. A small salary will be accepted. Address, A. B., Post-office, T—, till called for."

I felt merriment overspread my face, and he saw it.

"Hang it, mother, help me. I know I'm a fool."

"Don't say that, Richard. You are not a fool, and never less foolish than now, because you've tried to do your best. But wait a minute, and I will write a suitable advertisement, always remembering that your father not only does not object, but gives his hearty concurrence to our scheme." I took my pencil and wrote:—

A youth of fifteen, active, intelligent, well-educated, spells well, and writes rapidly and plainly from dictation or otherwise, desires to become a practical working chemist, and is wishful to fulfil all the lower duties in a laboratory, provided he can obtain a practical knowledge of the details connected with chemistry. References given. Address, A. B., care of Messrs. J. and W. Armstrong, Solicitors, Croft Street, Bloomsbury.

"Now, Dick, that is what you want, isn't it? I dare say I have said too much or too little according to advertisement measurement, but I have said all you wish me to say."

"Yes, mother, that must take. And now, will you ask my father to-night?"

"No, not to-night, Richard. He is tired; and you know my rule, never to worry him about home doings in the evening. To-morrow morning I will tell him."

I got up an hour earlier, and was dressing before my husband rose, and finding him disposed to talk, I said, "Dick wants to be a chemist." "Whew!" was the reply. "And I think, Arthur, it will be the very best thing for him. You know he is everlastingly asking 'why?' Now chemistry will certainly give him food for thought—stop! I know what you are going to say. He has drawn up an advertisement to put in the *Times*. There it is." I handed it to him, and he read it.

"Why, Mary, this will never do. No doubt there will be answers,

but the premiums demanded will vary from three to five hundred pounds."

"But Dick wants to go without expense to us. His very elegant and expressive phrase was, 'that he certainly could get grub for his services.'"

"Well, I'm not used to these things; but it strikes me that this advertisement won't pay. Is this Dick's composition?"

"Oh, no; his wording was, that a 'young gentleman wanted a situation, &c., &c.'—just like a boy, you know."

Arthur did not speak again while I was dressing, but just as I was leaving the room he called me back. "You may send it; but I warn you, Mary, no good will come of it—I mean to say, nothing that will serve Dick's turn. I must think over this start of his, and write to the Armstrongs to forward any letters, but to answer no inquiries."

And so the advertisement went in. A few days passed away in the usual manner, but to Dick they were days of restlessness: he had yet to learn to be a philosopher. At last came a packet of letters, sent from my husband's solicitors, but not one without asking a premium, and higher than we could afford to pay, having the consideration that Walter and Frank were to be provided for. Besides, the girls' prospects in life had to be considered. We were very much averse to their leading an idle life. The loss of Edith and Dot reduced our loving circle to six children—Richard, Alice, Mary, Janet, Walter, and Frank, who was the youngest. However much our income had increased, yet it was still inadequate to what we desired it to be for our children. Richard pleaded that he wanted no more money advanced for him than had been given for John, and then only did he require it as a help while he was, as he termed it, doing drudgery. He was altogether averse that the money we could spare should be paid as a premium. It was in vain that we argued that the payment of a sum was but just and right in return for knowledge which was not to be obtained any other way. The boy, with a self-willfulness which was even exasperating, would not give way on this point. He could not be led; he would not be driven.

"Besides," said he, "my father says he has no money to spare."

"Your father says, Richard, that although he cannot pay the large sums here asked, he may be able to manage a lesser one, particularly if it would be accepted in instalments."

It was no use arguing the matter. Then I bethought myself of asking my husband to write to Messrs. Armstrong, and stating the case to them. They at once promptly replied:—

You committed an error in causing the advertisement to be directed to our care, as it would necessarily be presumed that the party advertising could pay a premium. Send your son to us for a week or so. He may look about him, if he can do nothing else.

Richard was in raptures, but his father and myself had grave doubts as to sending our fledgling out so soon. The phrase "to look about him" sounded in my ears as if he was suddenly to be plunged into all temptations. However, upon further consideration, but not without

misgivings on my part, it was arranged that he should go to London, and—we could give it no other name—"look about him."

After ten days we had the following letter:—

MY OWN DEAREST MAMMA,—It's all right. Out of the money you gave me to spend I put an advertisement again in the *Times* the very morning after I got here. Mr. William Armstrong's son is here; he's about twenty; so we soon got good friends. I told him what I wanted, and showed him the advertisement you put in the *Times*. He said how jolly green I must be; of course such wording as that would imply that I was somebody, and so he took a pen and wrote what I now send you:—

"A strong active lad wants a situation in a chemist's shop. Wages, six shillings a week. Address, A. B., Post-office, 400, High Holborn."

I told him I didn't want to go in a chemist's shop, and I didn't want wages. He said, "Bosh! you don't want to clean knives and forks, and go of house errands, and all that. I suppose that wouldn't suit you? But you must crawl before you can walk. My advice to you is to get into some place of the kind, get the names of the drugs, and make yourself useful. You'll soon learn more, and by the time you are twenty you'll be worth taking into a wholesale place, or wherever else you want to get, without a premium; and if you mind what you are about you'll make somebody yet. But keep your eyes open, old boy; that's the way to get through the world." Dear mamma, I shall get on somehow or other; only just let me have a few pounds to pay my way. Oh! I have just heard of a place, and I'm to go on Monday. Lots of love, dear mamma, to you and my father and Alice, and all of them. I mean to be A. I.

Your affectionate son,

DICK.

"Here is a trouble for an anxious mother!" I exclaimed to my husband after I had read the letter aloud to him.

"What trouble can there be?" he asked. "It is not exactly the position I should have wished for him, but it is his own choice. It was said when I was a boy that 'Robinson Crusoe' made the runaways of a family. Now I think the book which you gave Dick on his last birthday, 'The Early Footsteps of Great Men,' must have influenced him. It is quite certain that I could not have paid any one of what appear to me the extravagant premiums demanded, and so it is best as it is."

"But about paying the money for his living?" I asked.

"Ah! that's to be considered. First, I must get a coherent letter from the Armstrongs, and when I know the particulars I shall be better able to judge."

A few days, and the post brought the desired communication. Dick had given their names as a reference to a house doing an active business in the drug trade at the east end of London. All they had said when applied to was, that they knew his parents, and that he was an honest lad. Richard had taken a bedroom, for which he was going to pay five shillings a week, but they did not know how he was to manage about his food. As for his Sundays, they had given him an invitation to spend with them.

This, though to me very unsatisfactory, I was obliged to be content with, and a whole fortnight passed without our hearing anything further. Then came the following:—

No. 4, New Road, Mile End, London.

MY DEAR MOTHER AND FATHER,—I am in very comfortable lodgings, with a nice old lady and her son, who is a steady-going chap. I've been finding my own

grub the last fortnight, but this is very uncomfortable, for I used to forget all about it, so that last Sunday morning I got up and found nothing to eat. I couldn't stand this, you know, but Mrs. Reed was very kind, and gave me some breakfast, and after that I went to Hornsey and spent the day with young Armstrong and his family. I told him of my adventure. He said the best way was to give Mrs. Reed so much a week to find me in everything except dinner and washing. Dinner I get at an eating-house near the business. This costs me ninepence every day. So when I got home at night I asked her about it. She said she would talk about it in the morning, as she liked to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest from worldly matters. I tell you this, mother, because I know you will like to hear that I am not among heathens. Last night, when I came home, Mrs. Reed said she had thought over the matter, and if I liked to live as they did she would give me bed, breakfast, and tea for ten shillings a week. Now, my dinner will cost me perhaps five and sixpence a week, and my washing a shilling a week, and I should like about a shilling a week for pocket money—for, you know, mother, a fellow doesn't know what he wants exactly to a penny—so that makes seventeen and sixpence a week, against which I have only six shillings. Now, if my father would allow me the difference for a few months, perhaps after this I could do for myself altogether. My work is rather hard, but I think I shall get to know a great deal more than if I had gone out as a swell. If you will only give me a twelvemonth to make the experiment in I shall do.

The letter contained a good deal about home affairs, not at all interesting to the outer world, but the business matter contained in it was practical; that I could see.

"I can do that very well," Arthur said. "It is not so much as I have been paying lately for his schooling; but there is one temptation I mean to shield him from. I shall remit the money to Mrs. Reed for his board either in advance or at the end of each month, as she likes best, and shall not leave it to him to pay or make away with it."

"You are hard upon Dick, Arthur," I said.

"Not so, Mary. Richard has hitherto had no command of money, and there are so many petty temptations which dog the steps of a youth first away from home that I do not mean to put it in his power to deprive Mrs. Reed of her just due, and in that payment I shall include also his washing bill."

"But you will send him some other money besides the shilling a week he asks for?"

"To give him more than two shillings a week I do not think would be wise. I know it is said by some parents that to stint a boy in money is to tempt him to be dishonest. I do not think so. I do not yet know if Dick has money belonging to his employers passing through his hands or not, or whether he has any chance of getting at it; but this I feel, that if a boy with even a shilling a week is tempted at all, he would be equally so if he were at liberty to spend a pound a week, and perhaps in a greater degree. Hitherto we have had no opportunity of judging the strength of the right principles we have both endeavoured to inculcate. I would go up to London, but Armstrong writes that it is better not."

All the necessary arrangements were soon made. I slipped in a sovereign, and sent a cake and other little things which I knew Dick was partial to. Also I did not forget a couple of fowls and a piece of bacon for good Mrs. Reed, who I hoped would be a mother to my boy, and so told her in a long letter, to which in due time she replied.

CHAPTER IX.

A BUSINESS OCCUPATION NECESSARY FOR GIRLS—MARRYING FOR A HOME NOT A HAPPY PROCEEDING—THE DUTY OF PARENTS TO GIVE THEIR DAUGHTERS AN OPPORTUNITY OF MARRYING—THE STORY OF AN OLD MAID—THE SELFISHNESS OF PARENTS—HOW TO INCREASE A CIRCLE OF ACQUAINTANCES.

ALICE was now eighteen, and Mary a year younger. I was desirous that both should be made economical and industrious, but not fussy, housekeepers. Alice was useful, quiet, and observant; but home duties did not suffice for Mary. In the conversations with my husband about our girls I was very anxious to give them some employment by which in the future they might, if needed, maintain themselves. Alice was an adept at her needle. It was she who helped the dressmaker, whom we always had each spring and fall of the year. Miss Roberts was the daughter of respectable parents, and had learned her business thoroughly; so I made an agreement with her that for a stipulated sum she should show my daughters how to cut out and fit a dress. Mary had a mathematical turn of mind, and very soon reduced the desultory instructions for cutting out into something like rule; for every turn and twist of the pattern she could give a reason, but she hated the needle. She was always sketching on every bit of paper or white wood, and even on her nail if no better material offered. There was no thought of making her an artist, but I certainly pondered very much over her future. One day Mr. Hendon, of established fame as a copper-plate engraver, paid us a visit on his way into Devonshire, and during his stay came across several of her sketches.

"What a capital engraver you would make, Miss Mary!" he said.

These words were like firing a train of gunpowder. Immediately I asked—

"Do you think she would ever make a living by it?"

"Most certainly, at wood-engraving, if she needed it," he replied, looking up in some surprise.

"Well," I said, returning his look calmly, "Mr. Norton and I both think it better that girls should have something to interest them—something to render them independent of marriage, if a suitable union cannot be attained."

"You are right," he exclaimed. "The number of marriages which take place without a spark of true affection in them is something fearful, just because a man offers a home, or because girls of middle class have no resource in themselves against either penury or ennui. Every girl should be able to face ill-fortune; she is none the less fitted to adorn all the good that may befall her."

Without entering more fully into the details of this business, it was decided, with Mary's earnest desire, that she should become a wood engraver, if after a month's trial she liked the occupation. For this it was necessary to be in or near London; but how was it to be accom-

plished? Ultimately, we fixed that in the spring of the succeeding year I and Mary should go to London for six weeks, and try the experiment of finding some one with whom she could reside while learning the art, that was to bring her a competence, if not fame. The latter word was suggestive of temptation, which I put behind me, for the memory of my beloved Dot had not faded in the least.

Through the winter we employed ourselves in household matters, kept up our readings, music, and drawing. We even discharged our cook, and took a good general servant; this not being done so much from a motive of economy, but in order to make my girls good housekeepers. I fully knew the value of this acquirement, and was determined that my earnest efforts should be directed in this channel. I sought in vain in all the cookery books for some simple but certain rules for cooking. Recipes there were in plenty—capital mediums for waste, with doubtful results; but whether hot, boiling, or cold water was to be used for cooking particular things, we were generally left to our own surmises. It seemed as if the books were intended for those who knew the first principles of the art of cookery, and not for the ignorant. Wearied with fruitless expense, we began to make recipes of our own, which, if successful, were written down even to every minute particular, to the smallest trifle, for we generally found that these seeming trivialities were just the things which made the difference between good and bad cooking. We called our book of recipes the "EPICURE," because the word signified all that was excellent but not luxurious or extravagant.* This employment continued throughout the winter, much to the amusement of my husband, who declared that he was most grateful for our consideration for him—so he termed our cooking mania.

"Every day in the week I have some fresh dish for breakfast, and for dinner what delicious puddings, to say nothing of the variety of soups and meat, I get. But how about the expense?"

Mary hastened to reply—

"Papa, you have all the good things you talk about at much less expense than when cook was here. I am sure there is not a scrap wasted, not even a bone, for when we have boiled all the goodness out we throw the bones on the root of the vine. Alice one day took up a printed paper that came wrapped about some cheese. It was about the culture of the vine, and it said if the roots were laid nearly bare, and bones thrown upon them, and then the earth lightly laid on, that the vine, if hitherto ever so unproductive, was sure to bear grapes. So we've tried it, and don't laugh, papa, at our experiment. I don't think we've told mamma this."

"And how do you make me such delicious soups, and vary them each day?" he asked.

"Oh, papa, that would be a long story to tell, but we don't have any more meat for them than what you see come to the table. And I know you thought that that potted beef which you had yesterday for luncheon came from Burt's, the pastry-cook's, and it didn't, you know, for I made

*This Book is preparing for Publication.

it out of that cold scrap of boiled beef that was left the other day. And it's true, papa, though you look as if you could not believe it.'

"My child, I cannot disbelieve you; but if you can transmute a bit of meat as dry as a chip into that delicious dish of potted beef, all I can say is that your talents as a wood engraver will be thrown away. You had better become a cook," he said, as he folded her in his arms and kissed her.

The tears rose up in her eyes, which she turned upon me, as I came to her rescue. "Mary means first to become a wood engraver, in which art she hopes to excel, and then she will be a cook when she has a home of her own, and is the presiding genius. And then, Mary, darling, you will be loved more for the comfort your knowledge of cooking brings with it than you will for all the fame the world can give you—and that is not a little. And should you never have a house of your own, and never need to employ your time in wood engraving, you will be a blessing to all around you, for you will be enabled to teach those to whom otherwise such knowledge could never come; and so you will have done well the work you have been set to do in this life."

After the girls were in bed Arthur asked me seriously if we were not living too expensively. I smiled with almost innate glee as I told him—which was the truth—that our expenses were much lessened by the discharge of the cook—that we had greater variety, with more digestible food; that is, it was cooked in such a manner as to render it more easily assimilated with the juices of the stomach, which really was a something to be fed, and not a mill to be used for grinding food.

He laughed at my simile, and then I entered upon a subject which had long been near my heart. Alice was getting of an age in which, though surrounded by all the endearments of a happy home, there is still a void in a young girl's breast that can be filled by neither parents, brothers, nor sisters. This I represented to my husband, who could not, or would not, understand me.

"Explain yourself, Polly. I am wide awake."

"I read a verse to-day in *Ecclesiasticus* which will perhaps make you more readily understand me—'Marry thy daughter, and so shalt thou have performed a weighty matter; but give her to a man of understanding.'

"Now do not exclaim, Arthur, but listen to me. I wish to keep my child with me as long as God sees fit, but I do not wish that neglected youth should sour in maturer age."

My husband fidgetted in his seat, and his eyes flashed a reply. I rested my arm on his chair, standing behind him, and, occasionally pressing my lips to his forehead, I continued—

"It is the concealed hope of all girls to marry, to be happy, as their parents or friends have been before them; for you know, as well as I, that there is no real happiness but between husband and wife, and yet, how is a girl to find a husband if she have no opportunity of mixing with the opposite sex? We have been so happy in our home, so selfishly wrapped up in its comforts, so lovingly idolised by our children, that we have forgotten to associate with other families more than

what has been absolutely necessary. What youth have we ever invited here to make acquaintance with our daughters—to see them as they are, with loving natures, with simple manners, and truthful bearing? And how are we to repair this thoughtlessness?”

“But I do not see it is thoughtlessness. There is plenty of time if lovers be really necessary.”

“If!” I hastily exclaimed. “Carry yourself back in thought to our early days. Had I not known you, I might, in the choice to which I was limited, have married some one who would have made of me a desperate woman.”

“There was no fear of that,” my husband replied, looking up smilingly in my face. “But, to return to the topic you have started, one would think, Mary, that you were desirous of getting rid of your girls, while I, on the contrary, would keep them always with me. Why should they marry?”

“Arthur, I never recognised you as other than youthful until now. You have uttered the speech of eighty winters. You, a man of forty-five, to talk like this! Do you think for one moment that I want to get rid of my girls, as you term it? God forbid! But I do not want to see them lead loveless, joyless lives, or making their placid joy apparently from the choice of a single and solitary life, when too frequently other selection has been denied them.”

“Now, how absurd you talk! There is Jane Hardy. Who can be happier than she? Useful, contented, and always in good spirits.”

“Did you never know that the happy soul lost her lover by death when she was very young? Some natures cannot love twice, and hers is one of them. Therefore she is no example.”

“Then there is Miss Mavor. She is certainly happy, though she is nearly sixty. What do you say to her, Polly?”

“I heard the story of Fanny Mavor not long since, and perhaps here is a case in point of my argument. She was the only and, of course, idolised child of her parents, bred up in every home luxury that their means could command, but at the same time made to be useful. She was rarely permitted to go from home. Mr. Mavor had a dread of her marrying during his lifetime, and never invited any one to the house who would have made her a suitable husband. On the contrary, he was so exceedingly uncivil that did any one venture within the sacred precincts, no matter how introduced, his conduct was such that the suitor never made a second experiment. Mr. and Mrs. Mavor married late in life, and when Fanny was about twenty both fell into ill health. Consequently she was kept, from her affection, a willing prisoner, neither thinking nor caring of what was to come after; and when she was thirty-eight she was left solitary, with only enough of fortune to keep her in a much less luxurious style of living than that she had ever known.”

“But who told you all this? It may not be true.”

“The best of all authority—herself. And more, she said that in her parents’ lifetime she had met one with whom she could have been happy, but the dread of leaving her parents alone made her put away all thought of marriage, and when they died she felt rejoiced that her

means were too limited to invite an adventurer, for, as she expressed herself—

"The solitary lonely feeling, the desolation of heart was terrible. Till my parents died I scarcely knew I was capable of loving other than them ; but to be left alone till I was seventy, perhaps, it was dreadful ; so I thought. But you see I have lived to realise the Scriptures, "The desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband." Children I dearly love, and so I make the stray little ones my own, as far as teaching and taking care of them, till they go out and battle with the world, and know its joys and cares, and *live*, which I have never done. My life has been one of vegetation only."

"I asked her if she had never loved, and I shall never forget the sad expression and suffusion which flooded her face as she replied—

"Once I did, Mrs. Norton. It was a painful dream, and I do not like to think about it."

"But why did you not marry then ?" I asked.

"Because I heard my father say so often that he hoped I would never leave them, and I always set duty before inclination. So I put such thoughts away, and perhaps it is all for the best."

"This is the story of the life of Fanny Mavor and her parents' selfishness."

"Selfishness !" my husband exclaimed, as he got up and looked at me. "That is a hard word, Mary."

"But it is the truth. Turn and twist such conduct which way you will, it is pure selfishness, and nothing else."

Arthur drummed on the chimney-piece for a few moments with his fingers, then turning round sharply, said—

"What am I to do ? I cannot go and invite a lot of young men in to marry my daughters."

In an instant my face became scarlet, and I am afraid my tone was rather sharp as I said—

"That is an unmanly way of treating the subject."

"Hang it ! have your own way, then. Only, if things go wrong don't blame me," and with these words he swung out of the room.

I sat down to take a view of my position, and to discover if I had been in error in thus almost suddenly broaching a subject upon which many men are very sensitive.

My husband was not different from others in considering his elder sons and daughters as yet children. Ten years is not a period of much moment to a man or woman in a settled position, but to a girl it is her fate.

Thinking thus, I mentally argued that if we loved our children we must give up our own selfish feeling of desiring to have them always with us, and so place them in positions that we should be enabled to feel life again renewed in their happiness.

I was not surprised when Arthur next greeted me with, "Well, Mary, how goes on your husband-hunting ?" He saw that I was hurt by his thoughtless remark, but I answered, waiving the question, as mildly as my rising temper would allow—

"Arthur, Alice has asked me to invite two of her school-fellows,

who are both older than she is. I do not think Mrs. Forbes will object to their spending a fortnight with us."

"By all means ask them," he replied cheerfully. "I am glad you are come to your senses, Mary; for do you know I fancied your theory of finding husbands for Alice and Mary, to say the least of it, rather indelicate?"

"Well, Arthur, I am of opinion that this indelicacy, as you call it, but as I think common sense, when wanting in parents is just what leads many girls to be restless, unhappy, and frequently to forsake their homes.

"We have a duty which cannot be ignored—to put before them, as far as able, the opportunity to choose between a single or married life. And it is this opportunity which we must make.

"Hitherto we have created our happiness away from the world. Months and years have rolled on, and our smiling infants, our prattling children, our rosebud girls, have expanded into beauty, which in our arrant selfishness we would keep alone to gladden our eyes and comfort our hearts. 'Do to others as we would be done by,' Arthur dear, and we shall not err.

"Daughters are a perpetual source of anxiety to a mother to obtain a suitable marriage, not that her own care or expense may be lessened, but that she may see no discontent on her daughter's brow, hear no disappointment in her tone, nor feel that there is bitterness lurking in her heart. This is a truth as old as the hills, my husband, and witnessed by the son of Sirach, ere the last of the prophets departed to their rest."

I paused suddenly, though scarcely aware of it, and had fallen into a reverie, from which I was startled by my husband asking—

"What does the son of Sirach say, Polly?"

"The father waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away sleep, when she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age, and being married, lest she should be hated."

"But it may be said now-a-days of the mother, not of the father, for all fathers in middle-class life are very heedless of their daughters' future," I remarked.

"Well, don't say so any more, Polly. I'll send the town crier notice to tell all eligible young men candidates for matrimony that they may call upon you."

I looked up in astonishment and disappointment to find that all my arguments had ended in ridicule, and I fairly burst into tears, which seemed not a little to surprise him, for he came over to where I was sitting, and, kissing me, said—

"Don't be a little fool, Mary. I dare say you are right; only a man doesn't see these things, and I don't know how to help you in the matter. I shall make a mess of it if I go inviting men here. You may do what you like, but don't ask me about it."

Upon this understanding the matter was dropped.

Christmas was approaching, when Richard would be home. I wrote to Mrs. Forbes, asking for the two girls Lucy Damer and Lillian Foster to visit us. Both were orphans, without fortune, only barely sufficient

to keep them from want. They had been many years with their valued governess, and were receiving the finish of their education under masters, preparatory to their taking situations.

My husband, being now the manager of the bank in the town, was greatly looked up to ; but so absorbed had I been in my children and house that I had never extended the circle of my acquaintance so as to embrace any families where there were young people, and I was not aware how isolated from them we had become till one day, expecting some friends, Jane, or Janet, as we called her, and now fifteen, said, "How tiresome, mamma, to have to make these preparations for such old fogies ! Why don't you ask some young ones ?"

"Janet !" I exclaimed in surprise, "you have associated with your brothers so long that you have acquired all their random sayings."

"Say 'slang, mammie dear, and that's just it.'"

I looked up very gravely ; not that I meant to do so, but her remark struck me forcibly. She was right, but as I was silent, poor Janet thought she had offended, and, with a deprecating look and gesture, turned my face towards her, and, kissing me, said—

"You know, mamma, it is so tiresome. There is old Mr. Edwards and his wife, and Mr. Paterson and his sister, who I'm sure is ninety, and lots more. I could not sit and amuse them as Alice does, and Mary actually seems as if she delighted to listen to a detail of rheumatics and coughs, and the doings of the maidservants, and how their sweethearts have gone away, and all this trumpery. And then what do girls want to know about who's likely to be in the town council, and who's to be mayor, and who's dead, and who's to have the vacant almshouse ? I hope, mamma, you'll know some young people when I 'come out.'"

I could not find it in my heart to censure her flippancy, or even to make a remark, and I walked away, for suddenly my child had turned a page in the book of life, and its readings were new to me, and this it was which led to the conversation with my husband relative to inviting suitable companions for the two elder girls.

Very recently old Wilson, the chemist, had died, and his place was taken by a gentlemanly man of five-and-twenty. His sister, many years older, kept house for him. So one fine morning, without mentioning my intention at home, I called and sent up my card to the sister. Miss May—she should have been December—received me with a great deal of flutter, and at the same time of assumed dignity, which rendered her reception rather a ludicrous one. Evidently she was an old lady who had been drawn from the seclusion of her village home, where she had reigned paramount in her respectability, and I am not sure that she thought my rank in life equal to her own, for on my taking leave she did not very cordially respond to my invitation to visit me.

Soon after this I called upon Mr. and Mrs. Elwood, who had retired from business, but who had two sons in London. I found the father and mother well educated, well bred, and most hospitable, but as I had never visited them before I had to invent an excuse for doing so now. The ruse ultimately succeeded.

I would just mention here that these worthy people became afterwards our dearest and best respected friends.

A week or two after this I went to a highly respectable bookseller. Here I had a great difficulty. I could only go as a purchaser, and was of course served with great respect. I was unable to say, "I am sorry I have neglected hitherto calling upon you, but it was from no sense of pride, only I have not before needed your acquaintance." I asked to be permitted to walk into an inner room, in which books were arranged, to look at the titles. Here, hidden by a screen, sat a young girl about Janet's age working at a canvas frame some really beautiful, needlework, which I could not but greatly admire. I offered to show her some of Alice's work if she would call and see it. She thanked me very sweetly, and after I had made a show of inspecting the books I left. When I got home I said to Janet—

"I saw Miss Marshall working some very pretty embroidery, and I asked her to come and see Alice's; so when you pass that way call and beg her to come with you."

Janet promised compliance. I did not know how old Mr. Marshall's sons were, though I had heard that he had two who were not at home. A fortnight passed on, my husband asked me no questions, and we were sitting together alone one afternoon when Janet and Miss Marshall walked in, very delighted. Janet had taken her for a walk, and the two had struck up a loving friendship that was seen at a glance. The work was exhibited and admired, and we tried to keep her to tea, but she said, "Mamma would be lonely, as papa was in London." To this plea nothing could be said. Janet looked as if she would have retained her by force, but after inviting her to come to tea on Tuesday in the week following, she accepted, conditionally on her mamma's permission, and then left. On retiring to rest, my husband asked, "Is that part of your scheme, Mary, to entice the little ones first? Marshall is a rich man, and he has two sons, one at Cambridge, and the other with Seldon reading for the bar."

"I did not know what Mr. Marshall's sons were. And how came you by the information?" I said.

"About the sons or the wealth?" he mischievously asked. "I have means at hand to know what money there is, but I have only recently heard about the sons, and from no one in the town, or I should doubt the correctness of the tale, but Crisp, the lawyer, at Farningham, with whom the younger son is articulated, told me."

"Well," I said, "I am happy to hear such good news." But it was snappishly uttered, as though I had been detected in something underhand.

Long before Christmas came we had so improved our position with our neighbours that pleasant calls and occasional tea-drinkings were established. Janet, quite happy in the society of Agnes Marshall, forgot about the "old fogies." Mr. May, the chemist, who did not come near us for some time, in the end proved not only an entertaining but an intellectual guest, and my husband always met him with the heartiest of welcomes.

One morning, about three weeks before Christmas, when we were

assembled round the breakfast table, and anxiously listening for the postman's knock, which we hoped would bring us Richard's letter, I asked, "How would you all like to have a party the week before Christmas?"

"I should like one," replied Alice, "on Lillian's and Lucy's account; but I don't care much about it, mamma, until Richard comes."

"And I don't care about it at all, mamma," said Janet. "Now, if Richard would bring down some of his London friends, then I should jump for joy, but our parties are stupid. Walter and Frank are so rough; they always come home from school eager to enjoy themselves, and won't give us girls a thought unless we can scamper over the country and go out with them in all weathers."

"And what say you, Mary?" I said.

"I do not care, mamma," she answered pensively, "if we are to have many old people here."

My husband sat reading his paper, with his face concealed from view. He did not speak till Dick's letter came, when all thought of the distasteful party was put aside. Richard said he could not be with us till the Christmas eve, and could stay only a week. This was rather a disappointment to us, who had calculated on a fortnight at least. Arthur said he was glad to hear it, as it showed that the boy was acquiring a love of business, and that he had probably become useful to his employers. He got up, and on leaving the room motioned me to follow him into his study.

"You were right, Mary," said he. "I could not have supposed the girls had lost their child-thoughts so soon. Give a party—ten if you like—but don't bore them with old people."

"That is all very well," I replied. "But where am I to get young folks? My plan is to give a party purposely to introduce the two girls, Lillian and Lucy, and before Christmas. Mr. May must be our only single beau, if he will come, but all of our newly-acquired friends must be invited, with the most influential of our old ones."

"Bravo! Polly, you are a capital diplomatist. Things may be safely left to your management."

"Without sending round the town-crier to invite matrimonial candidates?" I asked.

He went out of the room laughing, and I knew I had gained my point. I might do what I liked in the matter now. The details of our projected party had to be talked over with the girls, who seemed provokingly indifferent to all my arrangements, for I would not have given the slightest whisper as a clue to my hope of return-invitations.

"It is so odd of you, mamma, that you will not wait till after Christmas," said Mary. "Why, everybody will be engaged in making their own preparations."

"As this will not be a grand party at all, but merely a tea-drinking, a little music, and a dance afterwards, there is no occasion to make a fuss over it. You should recollect that Lily and Lucy will like some little introduction to our friends previously to the festivities of Christmas," I replied. "I do not intend to send out written invitations, but, Alice, you can call upon our old acquaintances, choose any six you like, and ask them to come, while I will do the same by the Mays, the

Marshalls, and Elwoods. Do not convey to them any idea of a party in the usual sense it is understood, but merely to tea and a little music."

And so this first step of the ladder was gained

CHAPTER X.

SCHOOL FRIENDS—THE PARTY—CHRISTMAS EVE—THE CHARACTERS OF THE FRIENDS—LEVITY OF MANNERS—EXCUSES FOR SHOPPING—INVITATION TO THE BALL.

In the following week Alice's two friends arrived—attractive and showy, but both wanting in that sweet nameless grace which shows the influence of the Spirit's teachings. Lillian Foster was a tall handsome girl, with hair of a chestnut hue, and large blue eyes, but there was a furtiveness about these sunny eyes which made one uncomfortable. You felt that could she be touched by Ithuriel's spear she would suddenly appear in a very different form from her present most lovely one.

Lucy Damer was a brunette, with sparkling black eyes, which seemed never to have a moment's repose. Her hair was black, and worn in short curls over her head, her whole semblance partaking of the Indian nature, to which, however, she had no claims, at least within her knowledge.

Two days after their arrival our party came off. Janet would have termed them all "old fogies," with the exception of Mr. May, who came late, but that her observant eyes were closely scanning the characteristics of everybody, and she became interested in spite of herself. And the new charm of Agnes Marshall's society being still fresh, she made herself very amiable, and submitted to be petted by Mr. Elwood.

Fanny Mavor had been invited as a kind of companion for Miss May. Experience, however, proved there could be no assimilation between the two. After tea the card tables were arranged in one room, and two parties at whist sat down. Miss May and Mr. Marshall played chess, and Fanny Mavor flitted about from one to the other. The girls retreated to the back room, and softly closed the folding doors. Alice's two friends played a duet, and played well, too. Then Alice sang, Mary played, and Alice sang again to her sister's accompaniment. Presently one of the folding doors was slowly opened for a small space, and Mr. Elwood whispered, "May I come in?" Janet held out her hand and conducted him over to a chair. The old man was delighted. He asked for several of the old ballads of his youth, but none of the girls were accomplished enough for this, excepting Mary, who warbled, for it could be called nothing else, "Ye banks and braes." Soon after one and another came in, till my husband complained of the desertion, and both doors were thrown open. Janet asked—

"When shall we dance, mamma? and will you play for us?"

"Now, if you like, and I will play."

The rooms were soon arranged for dancing; all the gentlemen were pressed into service, spite of faint denials and requests that if they consented all shortcomings must be overlooked. We had a good country dance, one of the olden times, then quadrilles, and, lastly, Sir Roger de Coverley. And so the pleasant evening passed, and separations came, and kind farewells were said, and hopes of future meetings, which latter came in all due time.

Christmas eve arrived with all its welcomings, but the soul had gone out of it. Unspoken memories of Dot and Edith were visible in all our faces, however deep buried in our hearts we strove to keep them. Even Walter and Frank's boisterous spirits were checked, but only occasionally, when they looked up, and, instead of smiles, saw the rebellious regret which time had been unable to efface. It was late before Richard arrived, brimful of mirth. He brought with him some small present for each—none were forgotten. Among other things, carefully packed in a box was a large gilded doll of gingerbread for Janet. She accepted the present without remark, much to the astonishment of her brother, who presently discovered her feeding Fido with the dainty. She was laughing, and said she was meditating on the best way to make "Fiddy" return thanks for being so pleasantly remembered. Dick looked crestfallen; he had expected anything but this, and set himself thinking how it was possible that his joke could fall pointless to the ground.

These two trivial circumstances opened my eyes to their characters. I felt I held the key to both their natures. I might trust Janet the world through. She would receive no insults, but quietly turn the tables on any who offered them. The gingerbread doll did not make the slightest difference in her love or regard for her brother; it did not lead her to retaliate in any way; but, whether she knew it or not, Richard was angry and disappointed, and in endeavouring to set himself right he simply made himself ridiculous.

There was no shyness about Richard: he and Lillian Foster soon struck up an intimate acquaintance. Dick assumed to be witty, and Lillian answered him with repartee, the instinct for which must have been born with her. As I listened to her bandying word for word, regardless of time or place or person, I trembled for the future which lay before her.

Meantime the Christmas week passed over without bringing us any invitations, and Richard was preparing to leave us. He was satisfied with his position—so he said—and had hopes of a rise in his salary, though his employers he termed "stingy curmudgeons." This was uttered in my hearing, not in his father's, and I fancied there was a concealed discontent not exactly in harmony with his assertions of being satisfied. He left home with but slight regret, and seemed rejoiced to get away. From this hour there remained a doubt in my mind which I constantly strove to dispel, and which his first letter after his return did not at all dissipate.

The characters of the two girls who had fallen across our path were not such as to satisfy my exacting heart for my daughters' companionship, and before the first week had passed I regretted I had asked them

for a month. In Lillian Foster there were so many signs of a deceitful underhand disposition, and in Lucy Damer such a passionate, impulsive, yet idle nature, that I dreaded the intercourse with my girls which must take place during their visit, and many times before the month expired I heartily wished that they had never entered my house.

Lillian and Janet went one morning for a walk. What was my astonishment to find that they had, on pretence of Lillian's wanting some perfume, paid a visit to Mr. May's shop! Janet mentioned this when she returned, and pouted because Mr. May had not asked them in to see his sister.

Lillian thought it was very fortunate: she did not like old "frosty face," as she had the rudeness to term her.

I was silent from astonishment and anger. I could not control the movements of my visitor, girl though she was; but I spoke to Janet, who at once said that it was not her intention to go again, as she thought Mr. May had not been very respectful to Lillian, who was always talking of him. Both Mary and Alice were present when this conversation took place. Lillian and Lucy were absent on a shopping expedition. Janet was older in quickness of forethought than her sisters, though in years the youngest. I thought it a good opportunity to speak to all of them on a subject which none but a mother or near relative should enter upon with young girls.

"But how did Mr. May behave, Janet?" I asked.

"I can scarcely tell, mamma. Only I think I should have spoken out if it had been Alice. But Lillian says it is the way with all young men; they like to flirt with girls; she says it's good fun flirting."

Truly, I had brought the poison flower into my house, and my girls would be the victims. I looked at Alice: she turned red and pale by turns, while Mary's eyes sparkled, and were turned inquiringly upon Janet.

"Alice, Mary, Janet," I exclaimed, "beware how you entertain such notions. It is a despicable cruel nature which asserts such things. How could Lillian have such ideas?"

"I suppose by visiting as she does twice a year with some of our old schoolfellows," said Mary. "But really, mamma, I cannot see any harm in Lillian's ways."

"It is but the beginning of a bad end, Mary. I hope and trust that neither of you will ever know from experience what flirting means. It is destruction to a girl. No man cares to marry a flirt, whose modesty has exhaled, and whose purity is smirched by levity of manner. A girl courts to win contempt."

"Mamma!" exclaimed Alice. "Oh! no, no, mamma, a girl never courts."

"By what other name will you call it, Alice? A girl who goes to a shop and purchases things she has no need of, on purpose to converse with the man who serves her, pray what do you call this?" I asked.

"But Lillian really required the articles she purchased, mamma," said Mary. "She told me so the day before she went to Mr. May's."

"Possibly so. But do you think she would have needed them so much if she could have purchased them only from Miss May?"

There was silence for a moment, and no reply was given. It made me miserable reflecting how many pitfalls young girls are likely to fall into without a mother's watchful eye—pitfalls which to guard against requires a prevision almost omniscient.

Here Lillian and Lucy came in, their faces radiant with the bloom of exercise, and their eyes sparkling with mischievous merriment. They were subdued slightly on seeing our gravity, and that we were all unemployed. They both looked inquiringly. Although ruffled with what I had heard of Lillian's conduct, I recollected that the girls were my guests, and therefore I could not say to them exactly what I would say to my own daughters. They told me they had been shopping at Mr. Marshall's. "But," I interrupted, "you must have a great deal of money to spend; you go shopping every day."

"It was only a paper of envelopes I purchased," Lucy replied.

"And have you had a long walk? You look quite rosy. Where did you go?"

"We have not been farther than Mr. Marshall's. Stobart Marshall is come from London, and Agnes asked us in, and so we stayed, and Agnes wants Lucy, and myself, and Janet to take tea with them this afternoon," Lillian replied, almost breathless.

"I am sorry this cannot be," I answered. "It was kind of Agnes to ask you, but I dare say Mrs. Marshall will call and introduce her son to us, but till she does I cannot permit any young ladies over whom I have control to call upon young gentlemen."

"But it is to see Agnes and Mrs. Marshall we are going," said Lucy, pouting.

"Well, you have seen Agnes this morning, and I suppose Mrs. Marshall also."

"Oh! no, Mrs. Marshall was not at home."

"Then how did you spend the morning, may I ask?"

"Oh! we played and sang, and Stobart Marshall told us some funny stories about what he had done in London, and where he had been."

I felt the colour rising in my face, and, without pausing to think if I was acting judiciously or not, I said—

"Lillian and Lucy, you will, I am sure, feel that I am actuated by all kind interest in your welfare when I tell you that it is not proper for young girls to visit at any house where the families are not on very intimate terms so soon as an agreeable young gentleman makes his appearance." I tried to say this laughingly, but failed. "I am going to ask you all a question. Do you care much for that which daily lies at your feet—for that which can be had for the asking? Does not the apple which is at the top of the tree look the fairest? The cherry at the farthest part of the branch, and where it is the most difficult to obtain, does it not look the ruddiest? Are you not more desirous to obtain either of these than any that are close to you? So it is with young girls. If they are but seldom seen they are the most highly valued. You are too young yet to think of marriage, or I would offer the advice to stay at home, where lovers are likely to seek you, rather than gad about and give them opportunities to talk over your seeming merits or failings with their companions. It is bad for the future of girls who

suffer themselves to be talked about in this manner. A sensible man would scarcely like to choose his wife from any such."

"But we cannot help gentlemen talking about us," said Lillian, pertly. She seemed to think it an honour rather than otherwise.

"My dear girls," I said, "if you wish to marry, you pursue the very worst plan. You are now about seventeen, and I think too young to do otherwise at present than seek to make yourselves independent by your own talents."

Here Lillian hastily interrupted me.

"Mrs. Norton, I never will be a governess. I hate the very thought of it. Indeed, if I had known where to go, I would have run away from school before this."

I stood aghast at this confession, but only for a moment.

"But what would you do, Lillian?" I asked.

"I do not know. A governess I never will be. I may marry some day, you know."

"I hope so; but if that be your aim, you are defeating your own object, if Mr. May be the one whom you prefer."

"I don't prefer Mr. May; but then he is so merry and full of fun, and sometimes I am so dull——"

"Why, Lillian, you have not been here more than a week. How can that be?"

"Oh! Mrs. Norton, I know I am very ungrateful, but I hate school, and I really think I like to do wrong sometimes. You cannot imagine the weariness of the daily routine of duties at Mrs. Forbes's. I think I could die sooner than go back again, and this thought makes me dull."

"But, my poor child, Mrs. Forbes is your guardian, is she not, till you are twenty-one?"

"Yes, and we are to remain with her till then. If I could but live with you, I think I should not feel so wicked," and she rested her head on my shoulder and wept bitterly.

I endeavoured to soothe her, and waited till her burst of passionate grief had exhausted itself.

"Do you really like Mr. May, Lillian?" I asked. "You have seen him here only once. I now recollect he talked to you a good deal that evening."

"I don't care about him more than any one else; but I think he likes to talk to me, and he says funny things."

"But what was it that roused Janet's ire when you were in his shop?"

"He only squeezed my hand when he gave me the perfume."

"Only what?" I exclaimed.

Lillian's crimsoned face was painful to witness.

"My poor girl," said I, "sit down for only a few moments," and I took her cold hand in mine and kissed her cheek, which burned as if with fever. "You must indeed be inexperienced not to know that when a man ventures such a liberty upon so short an acquaintance he must have a very low opinion of your intellect or your moral education. Perhaps he would not acknowledge this—not even to himself; but doubtless if he were asked to marry you he would answer 'No.' I do not say it would be the case with all men, but with a considerate and upright character it would, and such I have always understood Mr. May to be,

and I would gladly see you his wife. Therefore, dear Lillian, let me implore you to keep away from him if you would win his respect, for that should ever come before true love. Promise me this, Lillian. Why should you hesitate?"

"Because, dear Mrs. Norton, I like to talk to gentlemen, and I don't know any one else."

"And if you knew fifty," I replied, "you must be fifty times as cautious. Never give cause for men to compare notes with each other about your conduct. I once knew a gentleman who married a young girl of attractive manners, and who made her a most devoted husband, but confessed to her years afterwards that he was first led to desire an introduction from never having heard her name uttered by any of his companions, and yet she had lived among them from childhood. Do not think it is desirable for a young girl that it should be said of her by one, 'I walked home with her the other night;' 'I pressed her hand,' by another; 'She gave me this photograph;' and a thousand other assertions, true or false as they may be, made by these 'bragging-jacks' as Shakespeare calls them. Oh! Lillian, I cannot have your sweet youth and maiden fame frittered away by your own indiscretion. A girl of twenty is far too old, if her name and levity of conduct be united."

"Dear Mrs. Norton, you blame me too much. I do not think I have been guilty of levity. I'm sure I could not help Mr. May pressing my hand."

"Lillian, you must have given cause for this, more or less, and if what you have said or done does not amount to levity in its strongest sense, you have acted most unwisely. Now I ask you once more to promise me that you will refrain from making calls upon any one during your visit here. I am in earnest, and if you will not do this I regret to say that it must terminate within this week."

"No! no! Mrs. Norton. I promise."

"And I will trust you, Lillian," said I, after a moment's pause; and, with a kiss of reconciliation, we parted for the night.

What a load of care and trouble and anxiety I had brought upon me in a short time! My own daughters had been trained under my eye. Now here were two girls, dropped as it were into my care, of whom I had but little thought a month previously, and yet they were causing me an infinity of trouble, which I dared not tell my husband—so much did I dread his half-sarcastic, half-irritable remarks upon my diplomacy, as he was pleased to call it. I awoke the next morning unrefreshed from a troubled sleep in which my dreams had been interwoven in the most grotesque confusion.

On meeting Lillian I saw at once she was subdued; and when Lucy proposed another walk Lillian refused to go, whereat I rather plumed myself on the impression my words had made on her—deluded woman that I was.

During the morning, when the girls were trying over their music, Mrs. Marshall, Agnes, and Mr. Stobart Marshall were announced. Before the confusion of introducing and greeting had subsided young Marshall passed over to Lillian, took her hand, and said—

"You see I am as good as my word. I gave my mother no rest till

she brought me. I want to hear the song you sang me yesterday." Then, seeing my vexed look, "Ah, Mrs. Norton, Miss Foster and I are old acquaintances;" and turning to her, "You promised to come to tea last night, and upon my word you broke my rest by disappointing me. How can you be so cruel?" and then, without waiting for reply, took up a song. "Ah, you should have heard Patti sing this. You will come to London this winter, Miss Foster, and I shall have the pleasure of escorting you to the opera."

It would be nonsense to repeat all the stupid conversation which he rattled on, regardless of reply. I thought it amounted to positive rudeness. Could this be the steady plodding young man who was reading for the bar, under the direction of the clever Seldon? I was so annoyed as to be almost incapable of answering Mrs. Marshall's commonplaces; but when I saw him standing by Lillian's side, and with the music in his hand touch her ear with it, and lift the braid of her hair, and look down in her face, and whisper something at which she coloured, I rose up and, going to the piano, said—

"Pardon me, Mr. Marshall, but Miss Foster will play some other time for your amusement. Will you look at this Art Union engraving and tell me what you think of it?"

As I spoke I turned just in time to catch a grimace made to Lillian, but he moved at my request, and as he stooped to look at the picture Janet passed near and quietly said, with a voice as low as a whisper, "Shakespeare's 'bragging-jack.'" Mrs. Marshall was too far off to hear her, nor did I think any one heard it but myself, but on looking at young Marshall's face a ray of extreme intelligence came over it as he softly said to her, "And yet I've discontinued school more than a twelvemonth." Janet neither blushed nor looked confused, but passed on to Mrs. Marshall's side as if she had not heard.

Young Marshall presently sat down, and entered into a sensible conversation, discovering a mind replete with intellect, and the possession of a fund of information upon various subjects. Janet did not speak after this, but took up a piece of embroidery, over which her fingers flew, while the suppressed smiles round her mouth showed how much she was surprised and astonished. Agnes and Lillian were talking together. Mrs. Marshall had come to ask us to a "young people's party," as she termed it. Alice entered the room as she was speaking. Mrs. Marshall held out her hand to her, and went on to say that there were to be no old folks at all, only young people. Alice said at once—

"Then, dear Mrs. Marshall, I am sure we cannot come. We have never gone anywhere without mamma. You know she only seems like an elder sister; so indeed we cannot accept your invitation."

The good lady looked amazed. "Is this so, Mrs. Norton?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied, laughing. "My girls are too young to go out alone, even to your hospitable home, and my visitors Lillian and Lucy of course will not go without them."

"We cannot have our party without your young ladies, Mrs. Norton. Mr. Marshall and I had arranged it. I am sure we will take every care of your daughters, as if they were our own."

"Undoubtedly, my kind friend, but it cannot be. My husband would not suffer it, and as I should be sorry to disarrange your present plans, we will come some other time."

However, not to repeat our lengthened conversation, it was decided that we were all to go on the Wednesday of the following week. That was giving us nearly a week for preparation. Janet, after Mrs. Marshall left, assumed a great deal of dignity; she declared this was her "coming-out season." "I wonder if any grand people will be there? I shall make an important conquest I forewarn you all."

"And lose them very readily," I replied, "by being rude and satirical. Janet, what induced you to make so uncharitable a remark respecting Stobart Marshall?" I asked.

"Dear mamma, I do not know; it seemed to be some spirit of mischief within me. Really and truly, mamma, I did not seem to utter it of myself, but I could not avoid it."

"Yours was an illnatured remark, not wit, but perhaps more pardonable in a young girl. Do not let it happen any more."

"But, mamma, how my saucy speech brightened up young Marshall! Don't look so, mamma; you shall not complain of me again."

The intervening days were spent in deciding upon and making up the ball dresses. Lillian and Lucy were no adepts at the needle, excepting in fancy work—of no use here. We obtained the services of the dress-maker, and by the following Tuesday all the arrangements were complete. Alice, Mary, and Janet were to be arrayed in white tarlatane, the two with coloured ribbons, but Janet preferred white, and when dressed she looked as ethereal and charming as a fairy. For Lillian and Lucy, who had each a light blue silk dress, I had bodies made of tarlatane; and, further than this, they expended their own money in buying sufficient material to make tunics. The day before the party they brought in some coloured papers and made some small roses, with which they insisted upon looping up these same tunics. They made also wreaths for their hair, but the whole were badly made, and looked tawdry. I suggested that the tunics should be looped with bows and long ends of blue ribbons, and offered to defray the expense myself; but no, flowers they would have, and did, in spite of our united remonstrance. It was in vain that Mary told them they looked like girls who go about with shows; it mattered not; they attributed our dislike of their dress to envy, so there was no help for it but to let them follow their own inclination, and look almost vulgar in their attire, which, added to their bold confident manner, rendered them in my eyes very unattractive, and I feared they would appear the same to every one else.

Eight o'clock was the early hour fixed for our arrival; but previous to this no high-born English maiden or her anxious mother ever passed a more trying day than did poor me, with five young girls to chaperone, although it was but to a tradesman's ball. But both Mr. and Mrs. Marshall were of gentle blood, and could claim cousinship with a Cabinet Minister—a relationship acknowledged, and at least remembered, by their receiving from their grand cousin presents of game, and sending barrels of oysters at the proper season. However, we did not know of their blue blood at this period. When evening came I felt almost too tired to dress, not

from overwork, but from irritability in having heard scarcely anything else talked of but this party for the last few days.

We did not live very far from the Marshalls, but two flies were necessary to transport us. We arrived in due time, and were taken upstairs into a large room with two fires in it, where we fluttered out our dresses, then thoroughly warmed ourselves, and partook of coffee and tea enriched with cream and boiling milk, ministered to us on a silver salver by a Hebe, perfect in her neat and suitable attire, and with manners fit to render service to a duchess.

I have never forgotten the delightful warmth and sense of comfort that the room and its appointments gave us. Besides the dressing glasses there was a large cheval glass, also a glass in the door of the wardrobe. On the tables were perfumes and essences, combs, brushes, and violet powder. There were soft and scented towels, and hot water in bright kettles on the hob of each grate. Adjoining was a small dressing-room, fitted up as a coffee-room, and as we threw off our shawls and wraps, Hebe took them and laid them on a shelf in the wardrobe. Judging from the contents of the latter, the visitors were numerous; and as we were about to enter the drawing-room on the opposite side of the corridor, Agnes popped her head inside, and without speaking disappeared. In an instant Mrs. Marshall came in, with words of cheerful welcome, and we went with her into the room decorated as a ball-room, with its simple furnishings, its brilliant lights, and its elaborately chalked floor, executed in designs of a masterly character.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BALL—NEW ACQUAINTANCES—CUPID'S GOLDEN SHAFT—TRUE LOVE UNMISTAKEABLE—TRAINING FOR WORK—THE VISIT TO LONDON.

ABOUT thirty young people were present, and four elderly ones, besides my husband and myself, had been asked, in all probability in compliment to us. The young girls were all, more or less, of the style of Lillian and Lucy—Agnes Marshall excepted. There were young men, who, feeling not quite at ease, took refuge under a half sheepish, half patronising air, and young girls, full of life, spirit, and chatter, having a great admiration of themselves, yet looking out earnestly to be noticed. Though with all this the spirit of geniality had not come with the guests. The men kept aloof, the girls sometimes whispered together, and they all wanted, as Mr. Marshall expressed it, "warming up." He therefore proposed to open the ball with the old-fashioned country dance of the "Triumph." Two violinists—I had nearly said fiddlers—were engaged, one to relieve the other, and so the ball commenced, with myself, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Elwood, and Mrs. Hartwell, a sister of Mrs. Marshall, the latter declining to dance. I observed that Stobart Marshall had Alice for a partner, and Lillian's hand was claimed by Mr. May. I say claimed, because there had evidently been a pre-engagement. The rest were strangers to me.

When the dance had finished, and we were scarcely seated, Mrs. Marshall brought up and introduced two gentlemen whom I had not before seen—one as her son George, the other his friend from Cambridge. Never shall I forget the first impression I received of George Marshall; to say he was gentlemanly-looking is just worth nothing. Goodness—positive goodness—beamed from every feature; he was courteous and refined, but even these terms give no idea of the man. Mrs. Marshall took her son's arm and went with him to each friend she appeared to esteem most highly, and having lastly introduced him to Alice and Mary, said—

"Now really, George, you and Mr. Ewart must find out for yourselves all the rest of the people. Stobart will help you."

"Here I am, mother, in the nick of time. Does George want to be labelled?" said Stobart, and so in badinage and reply the three passed on. My eyes followed them. I saw them stop before Alice, and that George Marshall spoke to her, and from that moment the desire arose that he might be her husband. For the first time in my life I wished that Alice had been more beautiful, more accomplished.

Lillian and Lucy were in their seventh heaven; they were sought for every dance. Only one thing surprised me—Lillian and Mr. May were but once partners. I observed Alice decline to waltz with George Marshall, yet she was fond of waltzing with her sisters, but immediately afterwards as a quadrille was forming at the other end of the room, I saw him lead her to it. As I watched his movements, his manner, his whole bearing, all the *preux chevaliers* of old of which I had read came up in my mind, and culminated in Richardson's Sir Charles Grandison.

My dreams were soon at an end, though they had lived through the time occupied by the quadrille, by Alice advancing with her partner, her cheeks slightly flushed with dancing, her eyes sparkling; and, with a gentle animation thrilling her whole frame, she looked most lovely. Seating herself beside me as Mr. Marshall bowed and passed on, she involuntarily placed her hand in mine, and with a meaning pressure, which told me that the romance of life had suddenly opened its pages for her reading. At that moment I am sure she never thought of me as her mother. I was only somebody whose confidence she was secure of, to whom she could impart all that had so agitated her nature, and that one pressure told the tale.

Mr. May presently advanced to ask her to dance, but she declined, nor did she dance any more that evening, though the excuse for this might have been in the almost constant presence of her attractive partner, who hovered near, engaging her in conversation, and in his turn amusing her with so much that must have charmed, for she was startled into exclaiming, "How early!" when her father came up with his scattered flock, as he termed the remainder of our party, and said it was time to leave. But there was more than our own in the train Arthur brought with him, for Stobart Marshall came with Janet, whose eyes looked radiant with mischief, while he seemed somewhat discomfited, and Lillian appeared as angry as she, with propriety, could be about anything in society. There were many riddles to be read in the evening's amusement, but in time I knew them all.

The next day found Lillian half sulky, half irritable. To Alice she never spoke, to Mary only was she civil, and to her she expressed her indignation at Mr. May's treatment of her.

"Never to ask me to dance but once! I don't think he has one bit of respect for me."

This conversation was uttered loud enough for me to hear, though the speaker was unconscious of it till she turned her head; and, seeing me, her face was suffused with blushes of mortification. I took her hand and said—

"Lillian, do not be indignant at a circumstance which your own conduct has produced. It was no more than you deserved. A man cares very little about offending a girl whom he cannot respect. All I can advise is that in future you will be more guarded."

"But one cannot be always prim and cross," she impatiently answered.

"You need not be either at any time. Be courteous, but be also retiring and modest; and should you entertain a real affection for a worthy man, still never show it in that way that he can speak of it until he has asked your love. Above all things, restrain your feet from going near where he lives, from placing yourself in his way. If you should be so indiscreet, his preference will dwindle to nothing, for that passion is short-lived which is born of anything but esteem."

"I am sure, or, at least, I think that no one would propose to me if he were not sure I loved him," she replied.

"That is true, Lillian; no man ought to do so; but where true love exists, in either sex, it is unmistakeable, and is shown in a thousand ways, but never in woman's forwardness nor in man's impertinence."

"Mrs. Norton, how have I been forward, or Mr. May impertinent?" Lillian indignantly asked, and then immediately hung her head in painful consciousness of her former indiscretion.

"Lillian," I replied, "we need say no more on the subject, but I give you this advice—abstain from flirting, from forwardness of conduct, and from all levity of manner; for depend on it, as you sow these wretched seeds you will reap a life-long bitterness, either in a married or single life. In the former, your husband, having a remembrance of your conduct before marriage, will make a suspicious husband, who will place no confidence in your discretion either as wife or mother; and should you live unmarried, you will in your loneliness wince with the recollection that your own indiscreet conduct has brought you only disappointment. Let us say no more upon the subject."

Two days after the party I called on Mrs. Marshall, neither of the girls with me. George alone was at home. He appeared to be a gentleman of Nature's making, as well as of education. All that he uttered seemed so truthful, his manner so courteous, his whole demeanour so manly, that I was perfectly fascinated, and came away wondering what had bewitched me. He visited us many times during his stay of ten days, and charmed both my husband and myself. His brother left within the week following the party.

Alice, who was all life and animation at these pleasant visits, became changed afterwards. She was restless, and seemed to find no com-

fort but in continual employment. It had been suggested by Mrs. Elwood that we should have musical or working evenings at each other's houses, but nothing was fixed at the time. Alice and she had talked about it, and now Alice was eager that these meetings should be organised between the two houses.

With good Mrs. Elwood on her side there was not much difficulty, and so it was arranged that every fortnight there should be a social meeting at each house alternately, in which chess, music, and play-work should fill up the evening, and no expense for refreshments beyond tea should be incurred. This stipulation was not always adhered to. Nevertheless, it was understood that nothing more was expected. These meetings were very pleasant, but they were broken in upon by Mary's destination.

It had been a settled thing between us that after Christmas I was to take her to London, and see what prospect there was of her becoming a wood engraver. Lillian and Lucy had returned to school, but not without such strong repulsion shown by the former to her destined career that I had great misgivings as to how long she would remain with Mrs. Forbes. After they went Mr. May called frequently, but he seemed almost stupid—he had no conversation; and one day my husband thoughtlessly rallied him about Lillian. I certainly was unprepared for the shade of disgust which passed over his fine features as he gently but firmly repudiated the idea which my husband seemed to entertain of his attachment to her. That same night, when we were alone, Arthur said—

"May is in love with Alice; I am sure of it. I am sorry if it be so. She is too young for him."

"And I am sorry for him, for Alice has no affection to give," I replied. She had never told me this. Nevertheless, a mother's eye can understand silence as well as speech.

"Who is she in love with, then?" he asked in amazement.

"With George Marshall," I answered.

"Whew! This will never do, Mary. I know Marshall has high views for his son, through his family connections."

"With high or low views, time will show," I snapped, indignant that Alice should not be thought high enough for family pride. Arthur saw my vexation, and forbore to say more on the topic, but turned the conversation to Mary and her prospects. He was averse to my scheme of giving a trade, as he called it, to each of the girls; but not one argument would I listen to in depreciation of my determination. A melancholy circumstance had recently occurred. A father who had expensively educated his three daughters, or rather, whose education had been of that kind which had entailed expensive habits, had died suddenly, without making provision, beyond a small assurance upon his life for the sole benefit of his widow. The girls were adrift, each with a relative, but eating the bitter herbs of dependence. From this fate it was my earnest wish that my girls should be exempt, for such calamity can scarcely be called God's affliction. The children's sufferings are but what might be expected from their parents' heedlessness, or pride, because it has with foolishness been uttered that a girl loses caste by learning how to maintain herself. I regretted that Arthur did not see

the same necessity as I did for averting this possible fate from our girls.

Both men and women think of their deaths as a distant event; and a woman can scarcely talk to her husband about what may happen after his decease. To think such a painful thought is sufficient to banish happiness, and misery to converse about it. I consider it equally a matter of principle that girls should be rendered self-helpful by their parents as for the latter to take care that they should have set before them the opportunity of marrying if they can.

My husband did not actually oppose my proceedings respecting Mary. However, I knew I was acting rightly, and felt sure I should be guided in the means to obtain my desire. It was in the early part of February that Mary, Janet, and myself set out for London, the two girls delighted with their journey, though I noticed Janet was at times exceedingly thoughtful. At the station Richard met us, in obedience to a hasty summons received by him only that morning. He was full of questions as to our visit—which we had not mentioned when he was at home—and equally prompt with advice as to the best place for lodgings. We decided upon remaining at the hotel adjoining the station for three days, and Richard was to spend every evening with us. I can scarcely describe the boy's amazement as he listened to my project of making my girls self-helpful. "My sisters work, mamma? Time enough for that when they are obliged to do so."

"It is past time then, Richard; too late ever to be redeemed. You forget that without some training for life-work, however powerful the wish may be to earn money, it cannot be done, and it is now, while we have means to help and a home to shelter them if sickness or inability arise, that their energy must be stimulated to learn some art by which they may get their bread."

"But, mamma, you do not wish to make them strong-minded females?" he laughingly asked.

"If you mean strong to help themselves—yes. If you mean idle gad-ders, minding every one's business but their own, pushing their way, with all the assurance of boldness, into strangers' families, and talking about the rights and privileges of women—no. I wish it were compulsory that every girl should be taught some one thing properly, by which, if need were, she could win her bread. I am sure there would be less distress in the world."

"Why, mamma, I'm sure the girls will marry, and then all you are now going to spend upon them will be wasted."

"Well, they may marry, Richard, and then again they may not. There are two sides to the picture."

Richard sat for some time pondering over my words, until the girls entered from the adjoining bedroom. "And is Janet to be a wood engraver too?" He suddenly asked.

Janet replied for herself. "I don't know, Dick; I think not. I cannot copy so accurately as Mary does. I do not believe I could even copy a letter perfectly. I am sure I should make great mistakes. I don't know what trade I shall take to. I think I should like to be a dressmaker."

Richard suddenly got up from his chair. "A dressmaker, Janet! What are you thinking of?"

"I don't see any harm in being a dressmaker, Dick. I can then make my own and mamma's dresses entirely, and become a very useful person, I assure you. With this knowledge and what mamma has taught me of household affairs, I should be at a premium anywhere—in the bush or among the Kaffirs, for instance. What have you to say against it, Mr. Richard Norton?"

Richard had a great repugnance to my consulting his friends the Armstrongs. He felt that they would think it so odd that his sisters should have it in contemplation to work for their bread, as he phrased it. Now it was upon these very friends that I had hoped to rely for information as to how I should act.

We were very tired the first night of our advent in Babel, in search of the useful, not the picturesque; but, tired as we were, like the birds, we twittered and twittered till the last moment of our falling asleep.

Morning dawned with a thick pea-soup fog, only to be seen in its perfection in London. "This is the beginning of wonders," exclaimed Janet, as she sat up and rubbed her eyes. Then springing out of bed, and looking through the window, "Oh! mamma, how can we go about London in this fog?"

It was the same question I had asked myself, for I had mentally determined to devote the day to sight-seeing. "Never mind," I replied. "Let us go to breakfast first. One thing at a time and that thing well done, if it be only breakfast; then let another come as quickly as it will afterwards."

I will just mention here that the habit of prayer, which I had taught my children when infants, and which they had repeated at first as a matter of duty, had always been continued by them in a spirit of love and a feeling of entire faith, so that I need scarcely say how, before we left our room, the incense of *prayer in faith* had ascended from three hearts, who only knew that God existed, and God heard. All we had to do was to use the needful exertion.

We sat down to breakfast with light hearts, notwithstanding the dense fog. Presently a newspaper and a directory were brought us. The waiter thought we had asked for them. We had not, but we retained them. The directory was the very thing, of all others, for us to consult, but which I had not thought of. Carefully did we look out the names of the wood engravers, and Mary sat writing them down, and often wondering to which she was to be apprenticed. The morning did not pass wearily, for letter-writing home took up our time. At two o'clock the weather cleared off, with a cold, bright sunshine, denoting frost. We asked of the civil waiter what places of morning amusement were open. He replied that the Museum at Kensington was not far off, and to his mind that was the best. Accordingly we took a cab and drove there after an early dinner.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SCHOOL OF ART AT KENSINGTON—THE FEMALE SCHOOL OF ART IN QUEEN SQUARE—WOOD ENGRAVING—MODELLING—MARY AND JANET SETTLED TO A TRADE—THEIR HOMES—RICHARD'S TEMPTATIONS—ALICE'S FIRST TRIAL.

WE arrived at the Museum, and obtained an introduction to the proper authorities of the School of Art. We were rather dismayed at finding that teaching wood engraving had been transferred elsewhere, but were courteously invited to inspect the school for drawing and painting. Here in various rooms were pupils of all ages; some learning to draw from the flat—or studies sketched on paper—and others, more advanced, from plaster figures. Some very young girls were drawing from plaster casts for enrichment of ceilings, walls, and cornices; others painting from real sprays of leaves—the holly branch being the favourite—or from flowers, fruit, shells, and many other objects that would form pretty pictures.

Again, there was drawing from the life, though so still, so motionless was the sitter, the very resemblance of an Arab chief, that until the black eyes slowly rolled to take a sidelong glance at us we were totally unaware but that the object was a lay figure.

Another room was devoted in part to modelling. A young girl, entirely left to her own talents and skill to make her living in the world, was already working her path cheerily, by giving lessons in drawing and painting; and because some of her pupils wished to learn modelling, she was receiving lessons which she could impart again as she herself was daily learning, inch by inch, from the foundation lump of clay spread on the slanting board, to the fine touches which finished and stamped it as a perfect copy of some classical head.

In the corridor adjoining the various rooms, which were separated from each other by a *portière* of cloth hanging over each doorway, were various specimens of painting, drawing, and lithography, all executed by former pupils, who were now perhaps reaping the reward of the industrial talent nature had planted, but which here had been fostered and carefully tended till it had bloomed into useful perfection.

We observed one fine specimen of lithography, which certainly seemed unsurpassable. The lady who had produced it we were told was now in France pursuing her avocation. I was rather curious to know why it was that both wood engraving and lithography were no longer taught at this school, but did not learn anything except that pupils had ceased to present themselves for instruction, and that a lady who had learned the art of wood engraving in the school when lessons were given was now a superintendent and teacher of that accomplishment in the Female School of Art in Queen Square, Holborn. Having obtained her address, and seeing that the hour for closing had arrived, we took leave of the courteous gentleman who had given us all the information, and returned to our hotel.

At the first opportunity we went to Queen Square, but found we had chosen the wrong day—Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays being the days devoted to wood engraving; so we made an appointment by note with the lady teacher (Miss M. A. Williams), and paid a visit to the British Museum, which was within a short distance from the square.

Punctually to the hour mentioned we were next day at the school, which we learned was under the patronage of the Queen. Miss Williams very pleasantly gave us every information respecting the course of general instructions given in the school, wherein geometrical drawing and perspective figure drawing, with its attendant studies; painting in water-colours; fresco and oil painting; designing for decorations and for manufactures; wood engraving, and modelling in clay and wax were taught. For instruction in each of these arts different fees are demanded. That for learning wood engraving was four guineas the term of five months. Three days in each week from ten till three o'clock are the hours for study. Instruction in practical geometry and perspective could be obtained by all students without fee.

Mary's eyes sparkled, as a wood block, partially cut, was tendered for her inspection by a young girl employed upon it. I said to Miss Williams, "Does it take a long time to become a proficient in this art?"

"It depends much upon the taste of the pupil, upon her time for study, and her future destiny in life. The art itself is purely mechanical, and may be learned without any other faculty than being a faithful cutter, aided by a *persistent* industry. But if she have skill and genius to design her subject, as well as engrave it, then she holds the power of success in her own hands."

"And what chance of pecuniary reward is there?"

A peculiar smile flitted over the face of the lady as she answered—

"Wood engravers are very chary of giving their work into women's hands. Not because of their unskilfulness," she added quickly; "but I suppose they do not choose that work which has hitherto been exclusively their own shall pass out of their control. It was the case in America some years since, but not now. For more than twenty-five years this jealousy has passed away, and I am informed that young girls are steadily pursuing an industrious career in wood engraving, though at first all effort was made to hinder their progress. But the interests of the publishers and the great demand for illustrated works paved the way for their final success."

"But how did they procure work if engravers would not give it them?"

"I am told that those girls who had been taught wood engraving at a public institute, first of all went two and two, and fruitlessly solicited publishers for work. Finding they had come to the wrong quarter, one went by herself to a manufacturer of gas fittings. She showed specimens of her skill as a draughtswoman and engraver, and got so large an order for the engraving of articles as not only to keep herself in full work, but to employ her companions also. But then I must remark that she was skilful in designing as well as wood engraving, and this gave her two trades in one hand."

"I believe it is correct that a designer can draw in one day as much as a wood engraver could cut in a week," I remarked.

"Yes; that is quite true. Wood engraving is, as I said before, a mechanical art, and some have asserted that no knowledge of drawing is necessary; but I think there should be an artist's eye to guide the hand; otherwise the cut will be stiff and 'wooden,' notwithstanding it has been placed on the block by the most skilful draughtsman. Here is a cut, reduced from a large window. It is not more than a few inches in size, yet every characteristic is preserved of the original from whence it is copied. You will observe that the armorial bearings are distinct, the difference between the white and red roses is seen, and Henry VIII. stands out as the bluff King Hal, whom there is no mistaking. It is a specimen which is to be sent in for a prize studentship."

I looked at the candidate; she was not in the bloom of youth, and there was a nervous anxiety and restlessness about her which showed me how much depended on her success. The work she was then about was painting in water-colours a bunch of azaleas from natural flowers, and perfect indeed was her copying.

We took leave of Miss Williams, with a promise of soon seeing her again, and found waiting at our hotel Mr. Hindon, the eminent copper-plate engraver, who had first suggested to us Mary's capabilities for the art about which we had been endeavouring to learn something.

"Mr. Norton wrote me word that you were here, and I have called to see if I can be of any service," he said, after the first greetings.

"Indeed you can," I replied, "of the greatest, and I wonder I never thought of you before." So, after relating our morning's exploration, I asked him how long it would be before a girl could earn a living if she were proved capable of the work, and if it were remunerative.

"My own experience—for I was at one time a wood engraver—is that it brings a sure return for all the time and trouble spent in acquiring the art. If a twelvemonth is consumed in learning it, the second year should be devoted to practice, but yet receiving some reward for work, which could scarcely be expected to be very remunerative, but perhaps as much so as it would deserve; and in the third year the learner might reasonably calculate upon maintaining herself, if that is what is desired. I can assure you that in America many hundreds of young women do support themselves entirely by the art, and make even superior marriages to what they would if left to vegetate in idleness. Do you design to apprentice Miss Mary to a wood engraver, or to take the chance of her instruction at the school?"

"I scarcely know," I replied. "I am acquainted only with so much that I have heard this morning. In what way could she be apprenticed?"

"Some wood engravers require a premium, and the pupils are bound for two, three, or four years, receiving during that time a small return of the money paid in salary. Others accept no premium, but then the term is for a longer period, and there is no pay beyond the board received."

"Mamma, I should prefer to go to the School of Art," said Mary, twitching my sleeve.

"But where could you live, child?" I asked—a thought which till that moment had not occurred to me.

Mr. Hindon came to her rescue.

"Is Miss Janet also going to study?"

I was on the point of answering, but Janet said—

"I should so like to take some lessons in modelling, mamma."

"But to what purpose, Janet?"

The reply did not come before Mr. Hindon spoke—

"I wonder there are not more lady modellers. I believe there are but few, and certainly their services might be called for, in modelling groups for jewellers, for porcelain and bisquet manufacturers, and for decorations generally; at least, this is the useful employment of the art; and although, if I were now to commence to learn some new accomplishment, I could not say how I could get employment, yet the want of such information would not keep me from acquiring it. How to use it profitably would come afterwards; so by all means become a modeller, if mamma and papa permit it."

"But where could they live?" I asked, almost bewildered.

"You have only to advertise in the *Times*," said our friend; "all your wants will be readily supplied." And he took out his pencil and, after thinking for a moment, rapidly wrote on a scrap of paper lying on the table—

Board wanted in a private family, or with a widow lady not taking other boarders, for two young ladies, pursuing their studies through the day. Terms to be moderate, but remunerative. References exchanged. Address, T. H., 149, Euston Square.

"I have appended my own address," said he, "which will save you a little trouble. And now I am come to ask you to take up your abode at my house while you remain in town. I am an old bachelor, as you know, but my sister returns from Scotland this evening, and she, I am sure, will be delighted to welcome you."

It was a cordial invitation this, which I scarcely liked to decline, but not exactly knowing how long we might be detained in town, I said, as gently as I could, for I felt I was on tender ground, that we scarcely knew our own movements, and for the present would prefer some apartments close to his neighbourhood. This matter he said he would look into before he saw us again.

Upon his leaving, letters were written home, in which Janet's desire was expressed to her father. Then, having dined, the evening came, and with it Richard, who had promised to accompany us to the Polytechnic. Of course he was eager to learn the result of our day's work, and having heard it, very patronisingly patted Janet on the back, saying, "After all, Janet, it is a modeller of clay, instead of dresses, caps, and bonnets. I thought you would never come down to that."

"There is no 'coming down' at all," she indignantly replied. "I am not going to be modelling all day and every day; and I really do wish to learn millinery, mamma."

"But how would working in clay suit for handling delicate gauze and fringe and lace?" I asked.

"The gentleman who showed us over the school at Kensington said that the clay, far from making the hands rough, made them very soft; so I don't suppose they would be injured for needlework."

"This may be," I replied; "but my maxim is, 'One thing at a time, and that thing well done,' is the great secret of despatch."

The next day Miss Hindon called, and before evening we were settled in inexpensive but comfortable lodgings for a week. With the morning came letters to us all. Arthur had given me permission to act as I liked about Mary and Janet.

"You always get the best of me, Polly," he wrote, "and I can safely trust to your judgment, only what you have to do, let it be quickly done, for Alice seems unwell, at least she mopes a great deal, but that is because you are all absent, I imagine."

The letter gave me great concern. I therefore decided to conclude all my arrangements as speedily as possible and return home. We had to wait for replies to the advertisement Mr. Hindon had inserted. These came in due time, and from a lady whose very young daughter was a student in the elementary class at Queen Square. The lady, Mrs. Down, was not entirely unknown to our friends, her husband having been an engraver, who had left her some small means of subsistence, which she was devoting to the education of her only child, she herself earning occasionally considerable sums as a designer for paper-stainers, and also for calico-printers.

I was somewhat astonished at this opening for women's employment, and very much more so when she told me she thought of giving up this somewhat uncertain source of emolument for one which paid better, that of finishing photographs in the style of miniature painting. She had been taught the art in early life, and had constantly practised it as an amusement, so that the ability to excel in it had never from disuse slipped through her fingers.

I was much pleased to find one who with all her acquirements seemed so retiring. She was, as the Irish say, "sure of herself," and knew that the power in her fingers' ends was equal to that of Aladdin's lamp, always provided, as she remarked, that she "kept her health." So after all arrangements had been made for their attending as pupils at the School of Art I left my darlings in her care, with fervent prayer that God would keep them in His hands.

Our arrangements had left me with very little time to call on the Armstrongs, Dick's most particular friends, and also upon Mrs. Reed, who professed to take care of him.

To the Armstrongs I made merely a ceremonious call. I could do no other without infringing the law which Richard had laid down as regarded silence upon his sisters' avocations. With Mrs. Reed I had a long conversation. Everything connected with my boy was of the highest interest to me. In the end, I gathered from the good lady's desultory talk that Richard was not so steady as he was when he first came to London.

"I do not think he is among the society he ought to be with. You see, ma'am, that Mr. Richard is a well-educated youth, and with very superior manners; and although his employers are well-to-do people,

yet their trade is rather rough, and some of the young men are a queer lot."

"But," I remarked, "Richard must learn to walk before he runs, and it is all uphill work yet. If he has superior manners and education, and among rough people, I do not see that he should become rough also."

"I think association goes a great way towards forming a youth's habits. I do not say character, for that, it is to be hoped, is a matter of principle, or ought to be," observed Mrs. Reed.

"I do not perceive the roughness you speak of," I remarked.

"I do not mean entirely that; but Mr. Richard likes to go often to places of amusement, and much oftener he is kept very late at his business, sometimes till eleven or twelve at night, and all this does not tend to make a youth more refined, or, in my opinion, a better man. I often wish that you were living near, so that he could be more under your care."

"It was as if I had suddenly received a heavy blow, and I sat stupefied, yet listening to the old lady with my mind so disturbed that I did not even take in the sense of all she was saying. That he might be fond of amusement was natural, but frequent late hours I did not understand. It was ruin. At this moment Richard came in, expecting that I had arrived. His joyous face was at once overcast at seeing the gravity of mine.

"What is it, mother?" he asked in alarm.

Mrs. Reed got up and left the room.

"I have been inquiring all about your habits, Richard, and am vexed that you should be kept so late in business. It is not usual, is it?"

The conscience-stricken boy coloured up to his temples, and in a moment became ashy pale.

"I am sometimes late," he muttered, and, taking up his hat, said,

"I am in a desperate hurry, and have only a few moments to spare."

"And those, Richard, you must give to me. My boy, with whom are you? Where do you go? Do not think Mrs. Reed has willingly told me all this; but I have a right to know all."

I took hold of his hand and drew him down on a chair near me and said—

"Richard, I am your mother, and there is no one on earth so much your friend. Tell me, my boy, who are your companions and where you spend your evenings. I will not blame you; it may be only outward circumstances and not vice which is leading you astray. If I can help you I will."

Poor Richard! Shall I ever forget how the tears coursed each other down his cheek? And yet not a muscle of his face moved, and but for those tears he seemed turned to stone. I drew my chair still nearer to him and laid his head on my shoulder, and then I kissed him again and again. Presently he told me all his woe; for to a youth not hardened in crime these early troubles were to him as bitter perhaps as any sorrow of his after-life. He related to me how some gay companions had seduced him to the billiard-table, where he played almost

nightly, and which had left him without resources. Even his watch and pretty breast-pin were gone.

"And what, my boy, could be the end of this but dishonesty?"

"No, no, mother! a hundred times no!"

"But how could you carry this on, Richard, without some such end?"

There was hesitation for a moment. Presently, as I was parting his hair off his forehead, "I should have gone to sea," he almost whispered.

I shook from head to foot, and did not speak. The boy felt my emotion, suddenly got up, and, looking me in the face, shouted, "What have I done? Mrs. Reed! Mrs. Reed!" But no Mrs. Reed came. He rushed out of the room, and returned in a moment with a glass of water, for, though I had not lost my senses, I had so far fainted that I looked an image of death. For the moment I was alarmed; the sensation was new to me, but the cold water Richard was forcing into my lips, and the cold air from the window suddenly thrown open, revived me. Then it was that the tears rained down my boy's cheeks. He knelt at my feet, he rubbed my hands; in his distraction he would have promised—did promise—everything.

To think of leaving for a few hours was impossible; and Mrs. Reed having returned from her short walk, I hastily made some arrangements for the night, sent a messenger with a note to Richard's employers, and then he and I, after an hour had elapsed, went out, and in an open field near the house we again talked the matter over. Richard was "determined nothing should ever tempt him to visit a billiard-room again—no, nothing."

"It is a rash promise, Richard, and one you will not be able to keep."

"Mamma, do you think I have no strength of mind?"

"No more than I have, or any one else, when to do a good action against a pleasant temptation is in question. Prayer only will give you this strength, and frequently boys forget prayers when they leave home."

I looked in his face, which the tell-tale blush had overspread.

"When I am gone, Richard," I continued, "all your promises will be as brittle as glass; all your temptations, strong as a magnet to a needle, will draw you within their influence."

"Mamma, you think hardly of me. I did not know I was so very bad, or that you thought me so," he said reproachfully.

"Richard, I think no harder of you than of myself. At your age I did not gamble, certainly, but it is my having suffered in another way makes me know so well how to feel for you, and to know also how weak we all are to help ourselves against temptation. There is but one safeguard against it—prayer. Help may not come the first hour, not the second, not perhaps for many hours or days, but it will come, and while you pray you will not sin.

"Do not, my boy, rush from one evil to a worse. The sea is almost unexceptionably the romance of every boy's life, but it has depths of misery as well as sunlit waves, and one reared as you have been would feel all the misery in a tenfold degree. It has never been the one aim of your life to become a sailor. If it had been, difficulties and misery would assume other aspects. But you wish to fly to the sea as a refuge from present trouble—perhaps from debt. Is it so, Richard?" I asked.

No answer came.

"Tell me how far you have exceeded your allowance, which I know has been very limited by comparison with that of many others; but when you left home you thought it wealth. You cannot be very much in debt, but much or little, tell me the truth, and you shall be helped."

"I owe three pounds," was very reluctantly spoken.

I did not reply for a moment.

"It is a large sum, my boy. To whom do you owe it?"

"To several fellows. I have borrowed it at different times."

"And what for?" I asked, as I looked up and again saw the face no longer blushing, but positively crimson. "Tell me candidly, Richard, if you wish to be helped out of your difficulty. This I have promised, but I must know the particulars."

"For billiards, mamma." He hissed the words.

"Well, my boy, a gambler is a despicable character. I never thought a son of mine would sink so low, and——"

"A gambler! That is a hard word, mamma."

"And an ugly one, too, Richard. It is not suggestive of a Christian or of a gentlemanlike character; but be it what it might, you have, though so very young, earned the detestable name. My boy, it is a frightful gulf of degradation which yawns underneath the film of what is to you a pleasant excitement. I cannot enter into the details of the distress of a gambler's life; they are too horrible. I am so excited that I cannot see my way clear for your future. Let us say no more now. I shall be calmer after a while."

Before night had arrived the tangled skein seemed smoother. There was no time to write to my husband beyond saying that my stay would be prolonged for a day or two longer. I saw no good in telling Richard what I meant to do. He went to his work in the morning, and I to the Armstrongs. I told my tale to sympathising hearts ready to help me in my need.

"Richard is in a different position from when he first came to London; he knows a little of his business, and his manners are less brusque; his bearing is more manly," said the eldest Mr. Armstrong. "I think I may venture to give you a letter of introduction to a house at the West end, altogether different from where he is now, provided you are assured that his character is unscathed."

I answered according to my own conviction, that nothing was wrong there; and away I went on my errand, praying mentally the whole way that if my mission was for the boy's good I might be successful.

To make a long story short, I succeeded, though the salary was very small; but he was to board in the house. Then, all due observances being paid to Richard's present employers, money given to the misguided boy to release him from debt—a receipt for each small sum paid I insisted upon seeing—and a handsome present being made to kind Mrs. Reed, I had the satisfaction of knowing that he was in a better position, so near his sisters that they could have gentle influence over him; and, free from his old companions and from the incubus of debt, he could now look up with a light heart, and, I hoped, would make his way

in the world. His last words at parting were, "You have saved me, mamma, but do not tell my father."

"My boy," I replied, "I never concealed a thing from your father in my life, and I certainly am not going to begin now. Your father has never deserved that you should dread him, and why should you do so?"

"I do not exactly dread him knowing about it; but he will think me such a fool, you know, mamma, to give way at the first temptation."

"Possibly he will, and you have passed a correct opinion upon your own conduct. You are now doubly armed to become wiser in future. I leave you in perfect confidence. You have only to have faith that God's help will come if you ask it. No long prayer is needed. 'God help me!' are the talismanic words. But of one thing be sure—He sees you *always*. Do not act the fool before the high majesty of God, and yet be afraid of your father's opinion; that is cowardly as well as foolish."

"Mamma, you do use hard words."

"No, Richard; I only call things by their right names."

And now, at the moment of departure, my heart nearly gave way; but the hurry which generally accompanies the last farewell the instant before entering the train scarcely allowed me to think.

I dared not own to myself how desolate home would seem. I was very anxious for Alice, who, however, looked bright and cheerful. The evening grew into midnight before we were aware of it, for not till Alice had retired did I venture to tell my husband of Richard's indiscretion. It is a bad plan to tell of the faults of a sister or brother before either the one or the other. Arthur only laughed and said—

"It is no more than I expected, Mary; but I am glad you did not worry me about it. You cannot make a boy a saint. I rather think it is of service to him when young to let him feel the grip of trouble of his own making; and this, you will allow, was Master Dick's case."

"But supposing I had not gone to London, and he had fallen into crime?"

"It is useless supposing cases. In nine times out of ten I believe that boys may be rescued from incipient vice by judicious management, never by stripes or by abuse. Fear and unkindness have driven many a youth into downright wickedness. But about Alice, Mary, I am very anxious, though she looks very well to-night. I dare say it's all my fancy."

Alice had for a long time given me much anxiety. The pallid transparency of her complexion almost startled a stranger. Her eyes were glassily bright, not with the sparkling life of health. Neither stimulants of tonic medicine, nor of wine strengthened her; exercise, particularly in going up a hill, wearied her, till she looked corpse-like; indeed I have known her to cry even when she had to go upstairs or up a slight acclivity. The doctor suggested that her stays should be loosened, but as my girls never wore stays, only corset-bands without bones or steels, there was no remedy in this advice. "She will grow out of it," he said. Meantime she seemed to grow into it, for she became worse. If she took any food beyond simple bread and butter, any drink beyond milk and water, she suffered greatly, and very much as if she were bilious, though her nausea and weakness did not yield to the

medicines she took. There was an inertness in all her movements, a want of tone, of vigour in her constitution, which was unnatural to health. I had often seen other girls suffer thus, but had never heard of a remedy, excepting steel and similar tonics, which too frequently were of no avail. Fortunately, it was suggested by a friend to give her—

The raw white of a new-laid egg beaten to a froth in a wineglassful of cold water; this dose to be taken three times a day, a quarter of an hour before breakfast, dinner, and supper—or tea.

It was tried with perfect success. In two months she was a different being, could walk up hill or anywhere else, and without fatigue. The colour returned to her cheeks, and elasticity and sprightliness to her frame, and her eyes now shone with all the clearness of entire health. During the time she was taking the remedy she had milk and water for breakfast and tea, and toast and water *made with boiling water* for other beverage.

So much confidence have I in this remedy for want of strength in young girls from fourteen to twenty that I hope every one who reads this will endeavour to make known this simple cure, which is also equally efficacious in recovering strength after an attack of the jaundice.

"Pray, Alice, had you any admirers paying you a visit in my absence?" I asked, one day. "Tell me all about them if you had."

"No one was here but Mrs. Marshall and Agnes. If there had, mamma, I should not know they were my admirers, and if I knew them to be so, I don't think I could talk about them."

"What, not even to Agnes?"

"I do not know, mamma. I have never had an admirer. Perhaps I could tell Agnes, but——"

"And why not tell me, Alice? Every girl must have an admirer, a lover, before she marries, perhaps more than one; and who should be her confidant but her mother? A mother, who has been through the ordeal of courtship herself, can best tell where the pitfalls lie.

"You may smile incredulously, my dear Alice, but there are pitfalls in courtship, and one steps upon them sometimes unconsciously, and down tumble our prospects of happiness. Let me tell you the power which frequently digs them—no other potent agency than that known by the name of female friendship. Sometimes wilfully, and sometimes otherwise, the mischief is done which leaves the confiding girl a victim to treachery."

"But, mamma, I like Agnes Marshall so much. I should be sorry not to keep up her acquaintance."

"Do so, by all means, Alice, but never mention a word of your heart affairs to any companion."

Weeks passed away, and yet on the part of Alice there was much reserve. She liked to be alone, excepting when Agnes paid her a visit, and then she seemed a different being. One day Mrs. Marshall called, and in conversation complained that Alice seldom went there, and they felt it rather a slight. "'Tis true she always excuses herself by saying that mamma is lonely, and you know I can say nothing

then. Never mind, Miss Alice. George is coming home at Midsummer; perhaps there will be more attraction then."

This sounded coarsely, but nothing was further from the speaker's thoughts. In an instant I looked at Alice; she was deathly pale. She got up, and, with her back turned to us, rapidly examined some pieces of music, saying, in her agitation, "That song, mamma, for Agnes, I cannot find it."

"Perhaps you may find it in the breakfast-room," I said. "Run away and see."

To a mother's eye the heart of her daughter is sometimes revealed at a glance. So it was with Alice. Neither Mrs. Marshall nor Agnes observed the poor girl's confusion, and some few minutes after, when she returned, her face was slightly flushed, but her manner was calm, and her movements as graceful as ever. Our visitors soon after took leave. Alice had flown to her room when I returned from seeing them to the door. After a time I went almost noiselessly upstairs, and, gently entering, saw her on a low seat with her face buried in her hands. Startling her, Alice's face flushed as much it had been before pale. "Oh, mamma, did you call me?" she asked, trying to look unconcerned.

"No, my child, but the loss of your sisters has had a visible effect on you. It has made you nervous."

"Has it, mamma? I am not aware of it," she replied, with a sigh of relief.

Not for worlds would I have forced her confidence, or hurt her feelings by the slightest allusions to a malady so new to her—one in which a mother finds herself powerless to help. I could but tenderly watch the unfolding of her destiny, which I felt was approaching.

Mr. May called repeatedly, sometimes with his sister, but more often he was alone. All that man could do to win a girl's love was done, but so quietly were all his proffers of flowers and books accepted or declined that her father and myself both saw his cause was hopeless; but this he would not be made to understand. Whether Alice in the end ever guessed his love could not be told. In all probability she did, but she made no sign, and not until the second week of George Marshall's stay with his parents did Frederick May desist from his silent worship of, and from his many offerings laid at the feet of his idol.

The early days of June had come, with its soft breezes heavily laden with the perfumes of a thousand flowers, and its gentle life-giving rains pattering on the fragrant leaves. Alice passed from the quietude of her daily habits to a nervous excitement, kept down, however, by a strength of mind I thought her incapable of. Added to this, there was a dissatisfaction with her dress, shown in a constant change of her simple ornaments and ribbons.

One thing grieved me. I could not get her to leave home for more than half an hour together. It was of no use my soliciting her to accompany me in a walk. She never refused, certainly, but it was to a very short distance, and then a numbing pain in the head and a beating of the heart were sure to come on, so that we must return. One day we entered the house without knocking, for the hall door

had been left ajar, as it frequently is in country places. The sound of the piano swelled through the house; each note pealed with the firm touch of manly energy. I turned and looked at Alice inquiringly; she was as pale as the earliest snowdrop. In a moment she had bounded to her room before I could recover from my surprise.

I went more slowly up the stairs, and entered the drawing-room to see Mrs. Marshall and her son. The latter had just risen from the piano, and both came forward to greet me.

"I thought I would bring George to you this afternoon. He came quite unexpectedly last night, and has brought you some native flower seeds of Australia. He feels quite sure that you can raise them in your wee greenhouse. I tell him it is impossible. Miss Alice is not gone to London, too, is she? for I think we have not seen her but twice since her sisters went; though, to tell the truth, you are always the excuse," Mrs. Marshall laughingly said.

"I should be lonely without Alice," I replied. And in looking up, my glance caught George Marshall's face. He was watching the slightly opened door so intently that I involuntarily turned to see what had attracted his fixed attention. Observing this, he hastily said, with as much confusion as if detected in some crime—

"We are having a glorious summer, Mrs. Norton."

After sitting some time conversing on different subjects, Mrs. Marshall rose to leave, but again asked for Alice, who had not made her appearance; nor did she come while they remained, notwithstanding George endeavoured by several excuses to detain his mother.

As soon as they left, I went to Alice, who was lying down. She put her hand out to me as I entered.

"My head throbs so, mamma, after my walk. Who was it?"

"You should have come, Alice. It was Mrs. Marshall and her son George."

No reply followed my communication. After a time I left the room. When Alice appeared at tea-time her headache was gone, but she was so unusually silent that my husband rallied her on her low spirits, and challenged her in the evening to a game of chess, feeling sure, he said, that she would be enabled to give it all the quiet attention so requisite.

No great time had been consumed in the game, upon which both were so very intent that they did not hear a ring at the door-bell, and in a moment after George Marshall entered the room, saying he had come to call expressly upon my husband, whom he had not seen in the afternoon. For a moment I endeavoured to stand between him and Alice, forgetting that he could look over my head. On releasing my husband's hand he took hers, and had he been standing before a duchess, his manner could not have been more deferential. Pale as death, it was only by the strongest effort she forbore trembling. Presently the disarrangement of the chess-men offered an excuse for her fidgetting away her agitation, though unaware of what she was doing, till her father exclaimed—

"Oh! Alice, why have you spoiled the game? It was such a capital one."

"Papa, I do not like to be beaten, and you had the best of it."

"I am rejoiced to find you a chess player, Miss Alice. It is my favourite game," said our visitor.

After this we had some music—songs—which he played and accompanied with his voice. It was late, much later than our usual hour of retiring, when our guest left us; and, with only two or three exceptions, for the next fortnight he spent his evenings at our house. But at no time did he approach, or was ever seen at a distance, that the death-like paleness did not overspread the face of my poor Alice. So seriously was this continued agitation affecting her frame that I determined, if possible, to show her how much her mother could be more sincerely her friend than any other human being.

Accordingly I easily led the way to a discussion respecting the merits of this fascinating man, and once the reserve broken, there was little difficulty in getting Alice to speak on the subject.

One bright sunny morning George came, accompanied by Agnes, to say farewell. We had not expected this. His adieu to Alice was no more tender than to me; and with his farewell regards to my husband, he left, Agnes lingering behind to whisper to Alice that George had been suddenly called away, and they were all so sorry; and beyond this nothing more was learned.

Alice rarely went near the Marshalls, and if Agnes came she asked no questions. No suspicion of the state of her affections occurred to any one; so far all was well. Only to myself was her secret known, and we conversed upon the mystery as two girls might. There was no fear of the mother, nothing but the perfect love which casteth out fear. Thenceforth no subject was too trifling, no hope too remote, but she could gather consolation or advice from me. Having established this confidence, her nervous tremblings departed, and health speedily returned. Even I could not have surmised how deep was the wound; only as time went on the nervousness at every strange footfall reappeared. She had never gone to the Marshalls but with myself, for I had cautioned her not to let them suspect the state of affairs, and assured her that if the love of this man was to be won, it was not to be attained by frequently visiting his family, or by appearing to have an unusual interest in his welfare.

The holidays came in which Walter and Frank returned from school. In a year or two they would have to be provided for. The youngest, Frank, at thirteen gave unmistakable evidence of what his future would be. His tastes were decidedly mechanical. Walter at fourteen was different altogether, and we foresaw that with his choice of business or profession there would be a difficulty.

"One more year, mamma, and then I shall be free of school," said Frank, "and go in for an engineer."

"But it will take a great deal of money, Frank, to make you an engineer."

"I mean to rough it as Dick has done."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RETURN OF THE SISTERS—THE SEWING MACHINE—THE LOVER'S RETURN—THE PROPOSAL AND MARRIAGE—MARY'S CAREER—FRANK'S DESTINY—HOW WALTER BECAME A CLERGYMAN—JANET'S MARRIAGE—YEARS OF HAPPINESS—HER HUSBAND'S DEATH—HOW SHE MANAGED AND EDUCATED HER CHILDREN—WHY SHE WROTE THE BOOK OF HOME COMFORTS FOR SMALL INCOMES—THE CONCLUSION.

THE first week of August brought back to their home Mary and Janet, accompanied by Mrs. Down and her little daughter, for with the last day of July the session had closed at the School of Art, and the studies could not be resumed again till the first of October. I need not dwell on the meeting; it was like that which always takes place when there exists an intense family affection. Both girls were in this short time much improved in appearance. Janet had grown taller, and she seemed to possess a greater accession of joyous spirits. Her first visit was to Agnes Marshall, and she came back with a long story of how much her brother George had admired Alice. Not that it appeared he had ever said so in words; but as Mrs. Marshall remarked, he had lived entirely with us, "for when not present, his thoughts were, and that was as bad," "and, mamma, Alice never cared for him at all, so Agnes said."

"Then, Janet, it is of no use talking about it," I replied.

Richard had gone on very steadily in his new position, but was not satisfied. He wanted to get into a chemist's laboratory, so Mrs. Down told us, and was quite sure he would succeed. Though only sixteen, he was extremely persevering, and was not daunted by difficulties. She thought there was no reason why we should interfere with him. He was "biding his time," and when the opportunity offered would be sure to embrace it. The sequel showed our friend's judgment to be correct. I may as well say here that at twenty-one Richard had battled his way without help, and is now at forty a practical chemist and popular lecturer; and, moreover, though not by any means a rich man, he commands the homage of rank and wealth. If Providence had not led me at the moment of trial to help him, I shudder to think how different his career would have been.

George Marshall returned at Christmas. As before, Alice only was at home. Her sisters had returned to London. All her nervous tremblings were as great as ever, but happily with this difference, she could give me her confidence without fear. The eye of a lover is quick in discerning, although his great love may sometimes make him appear foolish and do stupid things, just as much as it does a girl. After the first week he sought my husband, and to him unfolded his hope to call Alice wife; "though," said he, "I almost fear to hope—Alice is so shy." He then went on to say that he had gone suddenly away for two reasons: one was that he wished to break the chain which she had wound around him, for never could he get from her the shyest look to indicate how far he stood in her regard. "Nay," said he, "she used

frequently to avoid me. If she saw me coming I have known her to turn another way, and but for my mother, who is an adept at reading characters, you would not have seen me now.

"'As Alice Norton acts to you, so did I to your father.' So she wrote me, and her letter brought me here. The second is that I went to be ordained, and am appointed to a curacy with income large enough for content and love, if you will let me win your Alice. If not, I will not say that my future will be miserable, for that it never will, but the sweetest dream of my life will have passed away."

My husband was so taken by surprise that he afterwards told me he left him abruptly, and came to bring me to his *sanctum*, where George Marshall had sought him, but the ludicrous part of the affair was meeting me a few steps from the door and leading me into the room, and, without one word, taking my hand and placing it in that of his guest, who had so far recovered himself as to take it and say laughingly, "It is Alice, and not Mrs. Norton, that I am seeking for a wife."

"True, my good fellow, but you must get my wife's consent before mine."

And so he told the story of his love in the question of "May I win your Alice, Mrs. Norton? She shall be to me the most precious treasure of my existence."

"But your parents, Mr. Marshall?"

"My mother sent me here, and you will not refuse me."

"But Alice, have you asked her?"

"No; and I dare not without your consent, though something tells me that if she refuse me at first, I can, I will win her. Only one thing I must tell you, that, beyond a few hundred pounds, the curacy is all my wealth. I will tell you why this is," he went on after a moment, seeing us look surprised. "Mr. Marshall is not my father, though his wife is my mother. I am a son by her first husband. All the money goes to Stobart and Agnes."

"But the name is the same," I remarked.

"It is the same, though there is no relationship. My father's name was also Marshall, and it is this knowledge of my prospects as much as all else which has kept me aloof from Alice, and the reason in a great measure why I did not first assure myself of her love before speaking to you."

I looked at my husband, and, rightly interpreting the look, held out my hand, saying—

"Come with me upstairs," and I led the way to the drawing-room, where sat Alice, quite unconscious of all that had been taking place respecting her. For a few moments only I lingered.

An hour elapsed before I heard the hall door shut, and at the same moment Alice entered my room, her face beaming with the brightest smile.

"Oh! mamma, I am so happy!" and then she burst into tears.

"God for ever bless you, my darling," I said, as I drew her towards me, and pressed my lips to her forehead; and then after a while I told her that if she married her lover, wealth would never be hers, though perhaps competency might. She heard, but did not heed, and had she

been told that she must wander a beggar through the world with him—all the same, it would have mattered not.

In the following spring they were married, and never from that day have we ceased to thank God that her lot fell in such a pleasant place. They were obliged to manage with great economy, for a clergyman and his wife must so live that they may spare for the needy, and she was provided for in case of death, for George Marshall had early insured his life. Alice was a good economist. In their really hospitable home there was peace, gladness, and even increase.

Janet and Mary returned after a twelvemonth, and brought with them an addition to the arts they had been learning—a perfect knowledge of the sewing machine. The last three months of their stay in London Janet obtained lessons in millinery. Mary remained at home a year, diligently practising with her sister the arts they had acquired. At the expiration of this time she returned to London to Mrs. Down, in the hope that her talents might enable her to procure some employment. For some time she had little success, but still her practice went on, that it might be of use the moment it was needed. Work came at last. She watched the illustrated magazines that were coming out, read the most highly wrought portions of a story, and sketched the action on paper. Some of them she even transferred to wood, took proofs of them, and then sent them to the editors of the magazines as well as the publishers. Then with Mrs. Down she called upon them later, and, in fact, did not cease persevering until she got some work to cut blocks for children's books. Thus the first opening was made.

Soon after this she was called upon to send in a design for a subject in one of the most popular serials of the day. For this she obtained five pounds. Mrs. Down and herself in the third year of her stay in London opened a class for teaching wood engraving and the use of the sewing machine, and very well attended it became after a time. To make it in a measure remunerative to all concerned in the affair, work was sought and obtained from several parties, for which only a moderate price was asked. The money thus obtained, after deducting the expenses, was divided into four portions; one was given to the pupil when skilled in the work; one to Mary, and the same to Mrs. Down, and the other was set apart as a fund for contingencies. Many hands made light work, and Mary was fortunate in her method of teaching, so that pupils were not wanting.

Mrs. Down also taught the painting of photographs, and after a year or two teaching the art of photography became a branch of their business. The skill with which all this was managed greatly surprised me, and so I said.

"It is all owing to you, mamma. You taught me the value of early rising, of industry, of method and order, and you see the result."

Mary is yet single; whether she will ever marry I cannot tell. From what I saw when last in London I should say "yes," and to a young brother of Mr. Hindon, the same who taught her the art of photography. But Mary says she is like the old woman who lived in a shoe, she has so many pupils to care for that she thinks her place is where she is—in the midst of them.

CONCLUSION.

SOME few years have now passed, taking with them many joys, and leaving many sorrows. I am myself a widow, and in circumstances where every shilling has to be carefully expended; for with a family whose education for the work of life was an expensive one we had nothing to save. The insurance of my husband's life, added to the liberality of the bankers whose manager my husband had been for so many years, enables me to retain comforts, and for many luxuries I am indebted to my children.

Walter was altogether a different nature from either of his brothers. He was a more studious, intellectual, and religious character, and wished very much to enter the Church. For a long time it was denied him, on account of the expense, until one day when we were lamenting this to George Marshall, he said—

"There are scholarships at Cambridge open to him if he does not mind being snubbed for his poverty. It is only for a time. These scholarships did not exist in my days, or most certainly I should have gone in for one."

"But you know he has never been to the University."

"That does not matter now. There are six scholarships open to all candidates. The highest is of the value of £60 annually, with rooms rent free. One of £50, two at £40, and two at £25 a year. I do not know all the particulars of these scholarships—that is, the conduct of the examinations, or the accommodation for the candidates. But I can get every information from the tutor of the college, St. Catherine's, at Cambridge, and then Walter can come to me, and I will 'post' or 'cram' him in all that is necessary for him to know."

And this was how Walter became a clergyman, as hardly worked as his brothers, but with a greater amount of practical Christianity in him, as the ordeal which he suffered at Cambridge from being poor rendered him all his life a self-enduring man. His brothers became rich by comparison with him, who lived and died at thirty, having only the things "which were convenient for him." He could not marry on his income of £80 a year, and wisely resolved to drag no woman into the misery of keeping up a respectable appearance upon starvation pittance.

Frank became an engineer, literally working his way from the lowest position upwards, and taking with him at every step the confidence of his employers.

In nine cases out of ten the only way for parents to insure their sons becoming practical men is to either apprentice them—which is expensive in regard to fees—or send them to work as early as possible, even if they receive no pay. Those boys who are worth anything will then become adepts in their craft, and knowing all the difficulties they encountered, and the peculiar temptations which beset their youth, will be enabled to feel for and guide those whom they may hereafter employ.

Where there is neither money, connection, nor influence, and children have nothing to rely upon but their hands and brains for the future, work, active and varied, or absorbing employments, must be given to both girls or boys, or idleness, with its attendant train of vicious proclivi-

ties, will mar the fairest work of God. There can be no progress unless the mind has been *trained* to labour from youth upwards.

Janet, the lively, the witty, and the youngest of my daughters, married a hard-working surgeon of great promise in his profession, and of some considerable practice in a country town a few miles from where we lived. For ten years a happier couple, blessed with a numerous family of seven little ones, never existed. Then came death and removed the bread-winner of the flock.

The consternation this bereavement caused among us all may be imagined. Each went or wrote to the widowed sister, offering all possible help. Happily Allen Wynter had insured his life; and I blessed the day when my own beloved husband had made it a provision of the marriage that the lover should insure his life for two thousand pounds, and make a will settling this sum on his wife in case of death. The very day of the marriage the premium on the insurance was paid and the will signed.

The house they lived in had just become their own through a building society, so that these two prudential acts saved eight souls from a world of misery. In addition to their income, the practice was sold, which brought in something more, but yet it was narrow enough means to provide for a family, of whom the eldest was but nine years. Simple diet, country air, exercise, and employment made them healthy. Janet's education now came into use. All that she could save went as a fund for her children's future; but she taught them all she possibly could herself. She discharged her servants, but had each day the services of a clever elderly woman, a widow in the neighbourhood, to do all that she and her children could not perform of household matters, and as each grew older, and required more of her time in their education, an organised plan of teaching at stated hours, exactly like a school, was entered upon, and Dame Hester, as she was always called, taken into the house entirely. This was after I came to live with her.

As may be supposed, the sewing machine was in great request, and modelling in clay threatened to usurp all other pastimes, for nothing was ever put before the children as a task. On bread-making days each child had a lump of currant dough given to it to make into any form it pleased, pigs being the favourite animal represented. Then the interest with which the little ones watched the ornamenting a meat pie soon led the way to the more enduring modelling in clay, in which the two eldest girls became such adepts that they would bring in a piece of bramble or rough stick, or anything that struck their fancy, and soon make an admirable copy of it. They were never permitted to be idle.

Industrious habits are given and tastes directed before one knows that anything has been done; and the same thing occurs with regard to idle ways; the mischief is irremediable before what is usually called "the time for education" arrives.

The extremely orderly ways of the little household, the good management there was in Janet, without effort, without trouble, or fuss, surprised me. Her early habits were inexplicable to me. Two hours before the household were astir I could hear her about, and after some time all was still, and so continued till Dame Hester went downstairs, and then the silence was over.

One day, when my curiosity could endure no longer, I asked her what magic spell she was weaving.

"Well, if you must know, dear mamma, I am turning author. You remember that Pope says, 'Trifles make the sum of human life,' and indeed they make the sum and comfort of a home, and although I thought I knew everything when I was married, experience showed me how little I knew of the importance of *trifles*. Great doors turn on small hinges, and great comforts hinge on little matters. And so, mamma, being willing and desirous, and so forth, to help others by removing certain sharp pebbles which sometimes unawares pull one up, I have written down my experiences in a book, and I mean to call it

THE BOOK OF HOME COMFORTS FOR SMALL INCOMES,*

which you must not see till it is printed."

"But it is an awful thing to appear in print, Janet; and how will you get it published?"

"Ay, there's the rub, mamma. But I have faith, though if that be all I can bring, it is of no use. I must add to my faith, works, and send it to-morrow to Mary in London, who will make the necessary arrangements for me, and very soon you shall see it."

My task is ended. I have managed my children to set them out in life, and they in their turn are doing their best to train theirs in every good and useful work, having no unseemly ignorant pride, but a very high notion of the

DIGNITY OF LABOUR.

There are two characters in my relation which I would rather not mention; still it must be done. Lillian Foster was in due time placed out as governess, a position for which all her moral principles unfitted her, though her accomplishments and acquirements were her recommendation. Her end was a disgraceful elopement with the husband of the lady with whom she resided.

Lucy Damer married a poor man of good family, whom she helped to make poorer by her slatternly unhelpful ways, and she died at an early age.

These girls could not be blamed. They were orphans, left without care or culture, excepting in so far as tended to make them accomplished girls—which is like building a fair superstructure on a foundation of sand—and so they fell into ruin and misery. May every parent shun this meretricious training; nothing but evil can come of it.

* The first chapter of this book commenced in the June number of the *LADIES' TREASURY*, 1865.

THE END.

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